

Wicker Park Lutheran Church

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I'm not worth it, I messed up my life. I had enough chances. A patient said this to me last year at Mount Sinai Hospital. I was doing my Clinical Pastoral Education, and doing my Chaplaincy rounds on behavioral and Detox Unit.

He was alone in his Room and in the darkness. He was not really wanting to talk to me, or to anyone, but I sat on a little stool and offered him Prayer or blessings, or just hear his story.

On my second visit, we prayed, and I blessed his hand and blessed him with some oil. He cried and felt very relieved.

The Ritual of Foot washing we hear in our Gospel reading today, might feel unfamiliar or awkward. We do wash our Feet, or shower. Maybe at different times. Before dinner we wash our hands or use sanitizer.

But 2000 years ago in Jesus' time, this ritual was common. It was hot and dusty, and most people walked barefoot. Only a few who came to prosperity had simple sandals. Every good host had servants or employees who cleaned their guests' feet before dinner and anointed the wounds with oil. Jesus and the disciples were also familiar with this ritual. (remember the anointing of Mary with the precious Nardin Oil) Shortly before his capture, Jesus comes together with them for a last meal. A friend offered and prepared a room for them, to celebrate Passover (Pesach). Even a Bowl and a Jar of warm water and towels are there. The only thing missing is staff, a servant or a maid for washing feet.

What happens now is typical for the disciples and us people today: no one wants to take on this lowly service, and so they prefer to sit down at the table and start chatting or even eating.

When Jesus notices this, he gets up from the table, takes off his outer garment, takes the jug and the bowl, kneels down and begins to wash the disciples' feet. He is not too self-effacing for this service; The Understanding of the Ministry is to be a SERVANT. On the knee lower down on our level and gentle touch us and heal.

I think we can all imagine how embarrassed the disciples were to see their Lord kneeling before them. Presumably it must have been very quiet, and all the more they must have heard Peter's words when it was his turn:

I am not worth it. I remember in Peter's resistance the Patient in hospital. But I Appreciate Jesus did not pass on Peter but gave him time.

What is our Call today, do we offer to wash our parents or friends' feet tonight before dinner? You might, but you are still good if you have other Gifts of Love. Maybe it's better to help or visit sick friends or family. Or help Grandparents when they get old. Or do some visits in Old People homes or Hospital. Even in pandemic times, we could not touch, we could do a letter or a video call. Jesus gave us an example of His Commandment of Love each other.

WASHING FRIENDS and FAMILIES feet might be easy, BUT remember Judas, He was sitting among them with the 30 coins, and Jesus still washes his feet.

Remember Jesus foot washing before he gave his Body for us, as an example for serving each other.