



# ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

*"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."*

**Our Vision:** *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

**THIS SUNDAY — April 20th, 2025**

**"The LORD Has Risen"**

## **Jesus Washes All of His Disciples' Feet**



On Maundy Thursday, we are usually grateful that some parishioners come forward, take off their shoes, and submit to Christ's command about washing each other's feet. But there is something awkward about this reenactment. We do not ordinarily wash anything but our hands in front of other people, much less have someone else do the washing for us. Some people might ask visitors to take off their shoes before entering their home, but that is about as far as baring our feet goes in adult society, not counting the back yard or the beach. Certainly we don't have servants performing ablutions. But in Jesus' time a servant or the wife of the householder could be called upon to wash the feet of a distinguished or beloved guest to get the dust of the road off their sandaled feet.

The only other mention of this custom in the Gospels is in Luke. Simon the Pharisee has invited Jesus to dinner. A woman who was a sinner comes in off the street and proceeds to wet his feet with her tears, wipe them with her hair, and then anoint them with ointment from an alabaster flask. (This woman is not Mary Magdalene, whom Luke introduces in the next chapter as one of the women who support the disciples and Jesus with their means, and from whom seven demons were cast out by Jesus.) When Simon and his fellow Pharisees remark that a true prophet would not let this woman touch him because she is of ill repute, Jesus tells a short parable about forgiveness and adds, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment" (Luke 7:44-46). And John the Baptist speaks of

not being worthy to untie his sandals, a reference to performing the work of a servant either in washing his feet or helping him undress.

Although some Episcopalians don't want to participate in this ritual and some Episcopal churches do not include it in their Holy Week liturgies, on Maundy Thursday we all read in John's Gospel how Jesus girded himself with a towel and washed all the disciples' feet during their last meal together. It seems that he is acting out a parable with the last moments of his time with his disciples. We who seek to follow him today should carefully reflect on his words and actions, whatever our liturgical choices.

Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "You are not all clean." (John 7:5-11)

What is it that they will understand afterward? First it is that they should act as servants to one another, as he tells them. But he is also referring to the lesson he will set later that evening by giving up his life freely, as he becomes the suffering servant of the Lord portrayed in Isaiah, the one who is despised and rejected but hides not his face from shame and spitting, who is wounded for our transgressions, and is cut off from the land of the living.

Furthermore, Jesus says that his washing their feet somehow means that they are part of him. Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Does that mean this foot washing is somehow an initiation into some deeper connection with Jesus at the end of their life together? Somehow submitting to Jesus acting as their servant in this way was essential to their understanding of who he was and who they were going to be after his earthly life ended. They are going to be sent out in his name. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me" (John 13:20).

It is significant, furthermore, that Jesus washed all the disciples' feet, including Judas's. "For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'You are not all clean.' He says, "I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he" (John 13:19). So the betrayal by one of his own will be another reason to believe that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, the Messiah, because Jesus has foretold the unthinkable—betrayal by one of his carefully selected and intimate friends who has been with him throughout his ministry. He reiterates that one of these disciples at table with him, whose feet he has just washed, who therefore has a part in him, will betray him. Instead of the Lord setting him a table in the presence of his enemies, as the Psalmist says, the enemy is right at the table with him, being served by him. As the disciples wonder who that could be, Jesus tells John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) that it is the one to whom he is giving a morsel of bread, and then gives it to Judas. Then "Satan enters into Judas" and Jesus tells him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." Judas leaves the gathering in the upper room, "and it was night" (17, 30).

What is the connection between the foot washing and the announcement that one of the disciples will betray him?

Acting as a servant to his followers, even the one who he knew was his enemy, puts into deed his teaching that we should love our enemies and pray for those who hurt us. It can also be seen as Jesus forgiving Judas in advance, prefiguring the prayer from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We should bear all these things in mind as we take off our shoes to come forward, or gird ourselves with a towel and pick up the pitcher and basin to kneel and pour water on the feet of others.

Or, if we do not participate in that ritual, we would do well simply to ponder again the actions and words Jesus offered all his disciples, even the traitor, at their last meal together. There is no institution of the Last Supper in the Gospel of John; that is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But the meal we Christians now celebrate as Holy Communion was originally begun with the traitor at the table with them all, allowing the Lord to wash his feet. As St. Paul later put it in Romans 5:8, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," just as he did for Judas.

*This week's reflection was originally written by the Rev. Dr. Jean McCurdy Meade for The Living Church's Online Journal, Covenant.*

### Readings for *Easter Sunday*

Acts 10:34-43 / Isaiah 65:17-25 + 1 Corinthians 15:19-26 / Acts 10:34-43

+

John 20:1-18 / Luke 24:1-12 + Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

The above underlined readings will be used and read during our Easter Sunday Mass service.

## CALENDAR

Note: We worship in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10:00 AM. Tuesday Noon Mass is held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel.

**SUNDAY April 20, 2025 Easter Sunday**

**10:00 AM Mass in All Saints' Church**

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at [www.allsaintschurch.org](http://www.allsaintschurch.org)

Recording of Mass available before noon at [www.allsaintschurch.org](http://www.allsaintschurch.org)

**Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children**

Ages 5 - 12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM

**Christian Formation for Adults (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays)**

Youth and adults around Noon after the Mass in the Library

Recording of Mass available before noon at [www.allsaintschurch.org](http://www.allsaintschurch.org)

### OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

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