

**Wednesday, March 20, 2024 // The Rev. Ben Robertson**

## **Holy Week**

Holy Week is a lot. Palm branches, passion plays, last suppers, new fires, bright flowers, and so much more punctuate and celebrate these days. And during Holy Week, one of the most potent of these sacramental beings is the washing of feet.

On Maundy Thursday, we read from the thirteenth chapter of John, "Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end ... And during supper Jesus ... got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him ... After he had washed their feet ... he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet ... I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'"

The title Maundy comes from the Latin word *mandatum* meaning commandment, as in Jesus' command that we love one another (see above). And what better way to demonstrate a profound, humble, sincere love than to wash another's feet.

Dr. Bill Leonard, a professor at Wake Forest University, once wrote, "I have never participated in a footwashing service that did not transcend the moment. Somehow I always forget how overpowering an event it can be. The sheer vulnerability of it carries participants beyond its anticipated logistical awkwardness to a palpable expression of servanthood."

On Maundy Thursday at All Saints we wash feet. For some, this is difficult, for others impossible, and no one is required to wash. But some should and some, because they are wrestling with a great question or their soul is adrift or unwell, may need to wash. In doing so, we lay aside pretense or burden, and fundamentally know what Jesus asks of us, and how profoundly Jesus loves us.

Please join us for Holy Week, especially Maundy Thursday. There is a lot going on here.