

MAUNDY THURSDAY

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"Feet" watercolour ink and pencil, Cara Heafey

**READ: JOHN 13
V.1-17; 31B-35**

"...love one another.
By this everyone will
know that you are my
disciples..."

REFLECT:

Jesus teaches us so much in this scene. To wash someone else's feet is intimate and tender, practical and unglamorous. It reminds us that loving one another entails vulnerability. It means loving even the unlovely parts of those in our community; and allowing even the unlovely parts of ourselves to be seen and loved.

With these actions Jesus elevates all acts of love and service that are small and uncelebrated and mundane and says this, *this* is what it's all about. This is how to be my disciple.

The stories of Holy Week feel particularly raw and real in our current situation. As in our Gospel reading, there's a foreboding sense that danger and suffering lay ahead; that things are going to get a whole lot worse before they get better.

But in this story Jesus shows us how to navigate what's to come. When darkness and chaos seem huge and overwhelming... pause. Kneel. Do something small. Something tactile, to ground us. Something that draws our attention to the present moment. Something that communicates love.

He reminds us that our identity as his followers is known by this. Not by our pattern of going to church on a Sunday. Nor by the unshakeability of our beliefs, an immunity to suffering or an absence of fear. But by the ways in which we demonstrate care for others and allow ourselves to be cared for.

Recent weeks have seen many beautiful and creative ways of doing this at a safe distance. Small, shining acts of kindness.

Our congregations are full, I know, of people who are amazing at running around looking after others; keeping our churches functioning, filling rotas, serving in ways that are often unseen and sometimes taken for granted. For those who are, like Peter, 'doers', it might be difficult be on the receiving end of care. Having to stay indoors while someone else does our shopping or collects our prescriptions.

Jesus is firm with Peter. This part of the deal is not optional. Part of "love one another" is having the grace to accept the help that others offer to us.

May we love one another during the difficult days, weeks and months to come. May this be what we are known for: our love.

PRAY:

- For those who are caring for others
- For those who are dependent on others' care
- For those putting themselves and their families at risk to provide healthcare and keep vital services running
- For opportunities to demonstrate love and kindness
- For gratitude, and grace

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS:

Our friends at Wheatley URC have a huge archive of online sermons you can listen to, and are regularly posting new resources on their website:

www.wheatleyurc.org.uk

If you need any help, have a prayer request, or would like someone to talk to; please contact your elder or one of us:
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