Thursday of the Fourth Week of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 13:16-20): When Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, he said to them: "Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. I am not speaking of all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. But so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, the one who ate my food has raised his heel against me. From now on I am telling you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe that I AM. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

"When Jesus had washed the disciples' feet..."

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Today, as with those movies that at the beginning take us back in time, our liturgy remembers a passage that belongs to the Holy Thursday: Jesus washes the feet of His disciples. Thus, this gesture —read from the Easter perspective— recovers a perennial validity.

Let us consider only three ideas: In the first place, the centrality of the person. In our society, it seems that what one does is the measure of a person's worth. Within this dynamic it is easy for people to be considered as tools; we use each other extremely easily. Today, the Gospel urges us to transform this dynamic into service dynamics: the other party will never be just a tool. It would rather be a matter of living a spirituality of communion, where the other person —quoting Saint John Paul II— becomes "someone who belongs to me" and is a "gift to me", whom we have "to give space" to. In our language we could translate it as "to care about other people's feelings". Do we care about other people's feelings? Do we listen to them when they speak to us?

In our world of images and communications, this is not a message to transmit, but a job to be done, to live up to every day: "If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it." (Jn 13:17). Maybe, this is why the Master does not limit Himself to an explanation: He imprints into His disciples' memories His call for service, passing it immediately on to the Church's memory; a memory that we are called to act upon, time and again: in the lives of so many families, of so many people.

Finally, a warning note: "The one who ate my food has raised his heel against me." (Jn 13:18). In the Eucharist, Jesus resurrected becomes our servant, He washes our feet. But the physical presence is not

enough. We have to learn in the Eucharist and have the strength necessary so it becomes a reality that “having received the gift of love, we die to sin and we live for God” (Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “For true friendship cannot be, unless in such as Thou cementest together by Love” (Saint Augustine)
- “An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the ‘smell of the sheep’” (Francis)
- “In all of his life Jesus presents himself as our model. He is "the perfect man", who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray, and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 520)