

Maundy Thursday, Year C

- One of my favorite holy days of the year
- Two things we tend to think of purely in the abstract:
- First is love
- Second is what it means to be a Christian
- No coincidence: those are more or less the same thing, at least to hear Jesus tell it: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
- We talk a lot about love, in our lives, and in the Church – but it's much more comfortable to think of love in abstract terms – we mostly consider it as a feeling
- A good feeling, and one that doesn't usually ask too much of us, one we can just enjoy
- But if Jesus means what he says to us tonight... if we'll be known by our love, then love isn't **merely** a feeling – it can't be – we can't be known by a **feeling** – feelings are fleeting – they come and go
- When Jesus talks about love, he isn't describing a feeling
- Jesus is describing a virtue, a quality of character, a distinguish trait – a habit he wants us to form
- And I've probably talked about this enough that you all know: the only way to form a habit is by repetitive action
- Love, in other words, is not something we need to **feel** – it's something we need to **do**
- Over and over again
- Which makes it a shame that Maundy Thursday, this day when we commemorate the *mandatum novum*, the New Commandment, only comes around once a year
- Because in just a few short minutes is the one time a year we live out the way that Jesus said it was good for us to love each other – the one time a year we embody love by embodying service within the context of our worship
- In all honesty, I sometimes wonder why we don't consider footwashing a sacrament – why we don't recognize the grace inherent in this one wildly uncomfortable and profoundly meaningful act
- It is Christ made tangibly present in the mundane – here among us, amid our dirty feet and the love that we're attempting to make a habit of
- It is following the example that Christ set out for us of what it means to love
- And, maybe hopefully, bit by bit, dirty foot by dirty foot – becoming a little bit more like him, each time

- So that when we leave here and go back into the world – those we encounter might actually recognize us as his disciples