

## **Holy Thursday Homily** **Deacon Thom Trunzo**

I was ordained in 1995 and had already been assigned to a parish for more than a year. Among other duties, I was Director of Liturgy and RCIA Coordinator. The parish did not have a building, so we routinely transformed the Catholic Grade School's Gym into our worship area. It was a lot of extra work each weekend and even more so setting-up for the Triduum. The parish was almost 90 minutes away from where we lived, and my wife, Beth, was serving as Pastoral Associate in our local parish. So for the Triduum, we were a family divided! I left Wednesday at noon with my then grade school daughter Sarah, (she was 12 at the time) and headed to our parish to begin transforming the gym as soon as school dismissed into our cathedral. I always organized what I called a SWAT Team of 6 servers who were committed to serving all three liturgies so that they understood the flow of the Triduum.

On this first Holy Thursday a year after I was ordained, we positioned the people having their feet washed scattered throughout the assembly sitting on chairs at the ends of various rows. All the servers, the pastor and I were barefoot to symbolize servanthood. I first washed the pastor's feet and together we washed the servers' feet, and then proceeded to the assembly. Two servers accompanied me and two accompanied the pastor as we washed the feet of our parishioners. The other two were responsible for keeping our pitchers of soapy and rinse water warm and refreshed and for emptying the bowls of dirty water. When we were finished and back in the sanctuary area, a server would bring us soap to wash our hands, a bowl and a towel to dry. But this night, as I stood there waiting for my daughter to bring the basin, she said to me, "Dad, we're not done yet." Of course I replied, "Yes, Sarah, we are. It's time to wash my hands." But she insisted, "No, we're not done yet. No one has washed YOUR feet!" So I sat down letting my 12 year old daughter kneel in front of me to wash my feet. It ranks up there as one of the most humbling and profound experiences of my life!

Later in that same Holy Thursday liturgy, it was time for the Preparation of the Gifts which, on this night, is always the collection for the poor. The parish had been prepped to bring canned goods, clothing, non-perishables or money. We formed a procession that mirrored our communion procession, so that each person laid their gifts in front of the altar. For some reason, one of our RCIA Elect, Steve, did not understand this until the procession began to unfold. But he got in the procession line anyway even though he did not have a bag of goods for the poor. When he got to the front, he paused, took off his very expensive leather coat, and laid it in front of the altar!

I bring these two things to your attention because on this night, my 12 year old daughter Sarah, and this not-yet baptized Elect, Steve, GOT IT! This was more than just a spectator mass for them. They understood that this mass was a way of life! And for me, the two events within this one liturgy were exactly the same thing!

In John's Gospel, there is no mention of the breaking of bread at the last supper. Instead, there is the account of the Washing of the Feet. Jesus, the Master, takes on the role of the lowest ranked servant and washes the feet of his guests. This end-of-life Passover for Jesus connects to the very beginning of his ministry when he changes water into wine at the Wedding Feast at Cana. At Cana, he instructed the lowest-ranking servants to fill the crocks. These were the crocks of water used to wash the feet of the wedding guests. In these most unclean crocks, water was transformed into the finest wine! At this Passover, Jesus, kneeling in front of and surrendering himself to his guests, provides the finest gift of service; an act worthy of and equal to being Eucharist.

Sarah at 12 years old, and Steve an Elect not yet Baptized were examples of living Eucharist, symbolically surrendering their lives and possessions to serve another!

May this Holy Thursday liturgy inspire us to become more humble and take on the willingness to surrender all that we are for the sake of serving others as their servants. Just as Steve took off his coat and Sarah knelt at my feet, may we be moved to serve others and to bring light to those in darkness. May we be transformed into the Body & Blood of Christ so that we may serve with the humble heart of Jesus so to become the living Eucharist alive in this world.