

Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper. 28th March 2024.

In the end it was fear and jealousy that did Jesus in. Daring to call God his loving, just and merciful Father and saying that we were the children and family of this good and kind God so threatened the power, comfort and status of the Temple High Priests, learned scribes and some of the Pharisee group that they deemed he just had to be done away with.

The problem for them was that they and their land was occupied by the Empire of Rome and that the Jewish leaders had no authority to execute someone for religious reasons. Only Roman authorities had such power and they would only do so if the charge brought offended their civil laws and administration over the people. This led Jesus opponents to bring a charge against him of claiming to be a King, a treasonous act against the Emperor's, something that went against Roman law and merited death. This matter had been bubbling for some time and with Jesus entering Jerusalem to the acclaim of the crowds his opponents time had come.

He was no fool, Jesus. He could read the writing on the wall better than most. Knowing that his betrayal, the trigger for his arrest, trial and death was at hand, he did what many of us would do if we are aware that our time is limited. He gathered his closest friends for a meal, special both personally and religiously. Within this sociable, sacred context Jesus gave over his last testament to the memory and care of his disciples. This last testament, in his last supper, was a witnessing to the new covenant that would be created and sealed in himself. He would do as he had always done, give himself away in serving the good of others.

This is what the washing of feet is all about and why he told his disciples, as he tells us now, to copy what he had done. It's why, after the consecration of the bread and wine, we repeat his words; Do this in memory of me. This doesn't mean that we must keep celebrating the Eucharist. It is that, too, but it means much more besides. In its truest essence it means we are to keep doing the serving and self giving as Jesus did and as the Eucharist and washing of feet symbolises and expresses for us and so deepens within us.

Doing this in memory of him is to do today and every day as Jesus Christ did and still does for us all. It's this doing, this living out, the actions of our service and love, with faith in our Lord's grace and the help of his Holy Spirit living in us, that gets us into sharing his New Covenant of mercy, truth and life. Our rituals mean all of this; they make it and him present now so that we can continue to make Jesus message and ministry active and present down through the hallways of history, until he comes again.

That's enough from me now for this sacred night of remembering his last witness and testament with his friends, ever misunderstanding, fragile and broken as they were and as we so often are. Now, let's do as he asked so that we can be strengthened to become images of him always.