

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you O God, my strength and my joy... Amen...

A lot of you are here tonight to celebrate first communion with some pretty awesome kids...

And tonight, is such a sacred night for this to take place...

As we heard in our readings that this was the night when Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples... When he washed their feet and gave them the commandment to love...

All of which took place around a table...

A table that we are welcomed at even all these years later, as Jesus' table is where we experience communion.

And where we are invited to be in relationship with God and with one another...

Further, this is a table where we are invited to be in relationship with everyone who has ever received or will ever receive communion.

Because communion takes place at a never-ending table, where there is a place just for you...

A place where you taste and see God... Where you take and receive God's love, forgiveness, and grace...

So that you can go out into the world and share God's love, forgiveness, and grace...

Which is what our gospel reading was all about... The act of giving love and the act of receiving love...

Love that can take on many different forms, even that of foot washing...

As we heard Jesus say...

“So, if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”

In an essence, this is Jesus’ way of showing us how we are to engage in relationship with others.

As relationships entail both serving and being served...

And most of us are comfortable with the serving part... Helping out others, caring for others, and doing what it is we can...

But most people find it hard to be served... As this requires vulnerability and humility.

But it is here in the give and take that the true beauty of relationships is unveiled.

As Jesus demonstrated through washing his disciples feet... Nobody is above another, we all are called to both give and receive

This is the sacred space of relationships...

A sacred space where true love is revealed, embodied, and embraced...

Because it is only when you let your guard down... and when you are open and honest to others... That they are able to fully embrace you and see you as you are... bumps, bruises, and all...

And, I get it, this kind of vulnerability is hard...

But it is here, in vulnerability and humility that love lives...

As this is what real relationships are all about— the give and the take— meeting someone at their feet and embracing them with love.

And if everyone could do this for everyone else, just think of the world that we could live in... A world where each person sees the true humanity in the other, meeting them with respect, love, and curiosity.

But since we live in a world of sin, betrayal, and hurt, this is not our reality...

And Jesus knew this...

Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him, but Jesus washed his feet anyways.

And Jesus knew that Peter would deny him, but Jesus washed his feet also...

Jesus tried to be in relationship with them despite their actions.

Jesus led by example, revealing that we are also called to do this.

We are called to meet those who have hurt and betrayed us with the same kind of humility and love... that we have for the people we actually like.

Which is a hard truth to swallow...

And in most cases, this is the right thing to do... Meeting those who have hurt us with love by embracing humility...

While at the same time it is also important to remember that... we are not Jesus...

Because if someone has hurt you too deeply, it is important for you to take care of yourself, and to let Jesus meet them instead.

But when you can, even if it is a little uncomfortable, you are called to meet others with humility and love...

Love that was poured out by Christ for his disciples in the sacred act of foot washing...

Love that will be brought to you tonight through communion, and through the bread that was made with love by the first communion students.

Love that we are commanded to share with others...

Love that permeates throughout this Holy Week.

Love that will go with us tonight, even as we depart in silence... As it is only through God's love that what happens next is made possible.

May you be held in that love and in this truth. May you find strength to share this with others. And may you embrace this truth and love from others... Amen.