

Maundy Thursday: 9 April 2020

Dear Friends & Members of the Wallneuk North Church. You are all in my thoughts & prayers.

In the name of the Creator the Redeemer and of the Comforter God. Amen. According to the church Calendar this week is called Holy Week. It started with Palm Sunday when Jesus Entered in Jerusalem riding a donkey as the Prince of peace. Yesterday, a prayer meeting was organised on “Zoom” by a charity called Star fish Asia. We prayer for the Staff who are delivering food door to door helping poor people in Pakistan during this period of lockdown.

You may have heard the story of the Starfish & a boy. But It doesn't hurt to be reminded of it every once in a while...

Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed, and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions. Off in the distance, the old man noticed, a small boy bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The old man asked, what are you are doing?” The young boy paused, looked up, and replied “Throwing starfish into the ocean. They can't return to the sea by themselves,” the youth replied. “When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.” The old man replied, “But there must be **tens of thousands** of starfish on this beach. I'm afraid you won't really be able to make much of a difference.” The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, “It made a difference to that one!”

Now we all have the opportunity to help & save lives. One might say how much of a difference can I really make?" addressing massive social problems like tackling world hunger or finding a cure for Coronavirus. So, when I catch myself thinking that way, it helps to remember this story.

Today is a very special Thursday called **Maundy Thursday**. It is part of the Christian celebration of Easter before Good Friday and marks the night of the Last Supper as told in the Bible. At the Last Supper, Jesus commanded that people should love one another, he then washed the feet of his disciples as an act of kindness. Jesus gave a new meaning to the Passover celebration by hosting a special meal for his friends & his disciples. All over the world, throughout the east and the west, in the loving memory of that night when Jesus celebrated the sacrament of the HC. Some churches do wash each other's hands or feet depending on their traditions.

As we started our Holy Week on last Monday, our theme was Spring Cleaning, to get rid of our rubbish from our homes & from our lives as Jesus cleaned the Holy Temple. The Thursday of Holy Week reminds believers, two special events, washing of disciples' feet and of the Last Supper. Remember none of the disciples were perfect, yet Jesus invited them to the Passover feast and instituted a New Covenant with them to continue His Mission.

I would like to introduce two of His disciples who were present in the upper room with Jesus, on the first Monday Thursday Night. My favourite part of this passage is the interaction between Jesus and Peter. As the meal progressed, Jesus got up, removed his outer garment, and placed a towel around him. That must be shocking for the disciples to see Jesus playing a role of a Servant. When Jesus came to Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" What an incredibly powerful picture of Peter's

Boldness, proudness, stubborn-ness, Peter would never allow the Lord to humble Himself to such a degree. Jesus' actions of washing the disciple's feet was an ultimate act of humility and servanthood. Peter could go from one extreme to another extreme, first he was reluctant to let Jesus wash his feet, but later he wanted a full bath.

The symbol of desiring his whole body to be washed. This confession represents, Peter's intention being fully surrender to Jesus and fully devoted to His Mission. Washing feet was more than just, removing dirt from the feet of his disciples, it had a spiritual message that changed the lives of the disciples for ever. When Peter received the power of the Holy Spirit, he became a rock-solid personality in his own way, loyal as a dog, dependable in crisis. He was the kind of leader, that others could lean on. Jesus could count on Peter to get the job done, whether it was easy or hard, whether, he felt like it or not, whether he understood it or not. That was the story of St Peter.

Now I will talk about another disciple. As you know every group or an organisation needs an honest treasurer, so Judas' took that responsibility, which caused his downfall as he was not honest but used by the devil in the upper room. But it's hard to believe that he would sell a friend, his Lord and Master just for 30 pounds. Maybe Judas just disagreed with the humble style of Jesus's claiming the Kingdom and thought that a forced confrontation with the Roman authorities would help to achieve his goal & mission. Perhaps he never thought that they would kill Jesus. Things just go wrong sometimes. We never know when our ambiguous actions will take on a life and lead us where we had not planned to go.

Now Jesus invites us to be generous & experience the forgiveness and guilt free life. The invitation still stands, to follow Him, to be purified, and washed completely clean.

This Maundy Thursday let's be generous in providing sanitiser, clean water & food to the poor & hungry people in the world, as Jesus provided a meal of Passover. Jesus said this is my body broken for you & for the world. This is my blood shed for the forgiveness of many. Let's open & examine our hearts with generosity, as we have a few moments of silent reflection