

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU?
JOHN 13:12, 1 COR 11:28 MAUNDY THURSDAY APR 13, '17

¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you?

²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

It is good for you to have a healthy, balanced diet that includes
dairy products, grains, fruits and vegetables and meat,
unless you are lactose intolerant, then don't drink milk
or gluten intolerant, then don't eat wheat bread,
or have another food allergy, such as to peanuts.

Because then, instead of being good for you,
those healthy foods will Instead make you sick.

A prayer commonly used in church is that God would help us
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest his word.

By digest we mean understand & take to heart.
God's word & sacraments are good for us,
that is unless we don't understand - spiritually digest it –
and then we can become spiritually sick.

So, Jesus asks his disciples, “Do you understand?”

He goes on to say that he has set an example for them
that they should wash one another's feet.

But if we think this just means that we should have a custom
of washing people's feet,
or that the key to following Jesus as our savior
is following his example in what we do,

Then we totally misunderstand what he is doing
and how we are saved.

Jesus did something else hard to understand this same night.

He gave them his body & blood along with the bread & wine.

This also is something Jesus says we ourselves should do
& Paul says when we do, we should examine ourselves,
we should ask ourselves: Do I understand?

I think both Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet before the meal
and what he gives them at the end of the meal
are intended to make them understand the same things,
things we also need to understand,

So the questions raised here for us are...

DO I UNDERSTAND MY UNCLEANNESS?
DO I UNDERSTAND HOW JESUS TOOK MY FILTH?
DO I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM MADE CLEAN?

DO I UNDERSTAND MY UNCLEANNESS?

One thing Jesus' washing of the disciples feet did was
 show them they were dirty and needed to be cleaned.
They should have realized this before.

 After walking in sandals, It was customary
 to have feet washed when coming inside,
 especially for such a special occasion as this.

But apparently the disciples all thought they were
 not that bad the way they were.

Jesus shows them they are not OK, they need washing.
This is true not just on the outside but on the inside.

This is one thing Jesus shows us by his death for us
 and by giving us his body & blood in Holy Communion.

We are dirty sinners. We need to understand this.

We are not just slightly dusty sinners but filthy sinners.

 We need to take a good look in the mirror.

 We need to check what has been in our filthy ears,
 check our grimy, stiff & stubborn necks,
 check what has come out of our smelly mouths
 check what we grab for with our grubby hands,
 check our sweaty private parts
 and where we have tracked with our filthy feet.

And once we have taken a good look at what our sins are
 we need to understand that these sins matter.

 They make us repulsive to God and to others.

 We will not be fine or good enough as we are.

 Every one of our germy sins carries the disease of death.

Then we need to realize that we cannot clean ourselves.

 No matter how hard we try, we can never
 reach all the dirty spots by our own doing.

 Our only hope is to be forgiven by someone else
 using the powerful cleanser of God's own word.

But then we need to ask ourselves if we truly want our sins
 to be taken away, if we are ready to give them up,
 or if, like Peter, we want to say, "Don't bother."

I am saving that bubble gum parked behind my ear
 or the crumbs in my beard for a snack later.

I really like those sins and want to keep on enjoying them.
Do I really understand my uncleanness and what it does
and how badly I need it to be taken away?

I invite you to take the hymnal and turn to page 329
where we find some questions written to help us
in our examination before Holy Communion.

I will read the first four questions
and invite you to read aloud with me the answers.

1. *Do you believe that you are a sinner?*

Yes, I believe it, I am a sinner.

2. *How do you know this?*

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

3. *Are you sorry for your sins?*

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

3. *What have you deserved from God because of your sins?*

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation.

See Romans 6:21, 23.

Now there is another kind of question to ask ourselves.

DO I UNDERSTAND HOW JESUS TOOK MY FILTH?

Jesus' washing the disciples' feet was surprising to them.

This was a job to be done by the lowest servant.

He who was their lord humbled himself to take the dirt
that was too filthy for their feet into his hands.

This object lesson was helping them to understand
that this was only the beginning

He who was their God was humbling himself
to take all the suffering of their shame
and all the punishment for their guilt
on himself by his death on the disgusting cross.

This is what we need to understand,
that Jesus, who is true God, became a true man
so that he could truly suffer & die in my place
because this is the only way for us to be made clean,
and the only way to receive the benefit of this
is through faith that he did it for me.

So, how can I know and understand this?

So I can be sure, he not only tells me in his word
but also gives me in Holy Communion
the very body that died and blood he shed.

Here is one of the hardest things in Christianity to understand.

The bread and wine is still bread and wine
but at the same time it is Jesus' body and blood.
not just a symbol as a reminder but the reality.
Body & blood received not just spiritually through faith
because of my faith that they are,
but received by mouth and swallowed by all
who eat and drink it even if they don't believe it,
because of what Jesus himself says
and because his words make it true.

This is why Paul says be careful, examine yourself
to be sure you are not real-presence intolerant.
Do you believe Jesus died for you and that
the way he is giving you forgiveness here
is by feeding you his true body and blood?

If not, it will hurt you instead of helping you.

Let's turn again to the hymnal, page 329.

I will read questions 5 to 15
and have you read the answers with me.

5. *Do you hope to be saved?*

Yes, that is my hope.

6. *In whom then do you trust?*

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. *Who is Christ?*

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. *How many Gods are there?*

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

9. *What has Christ done for you that you trust in him?*

He died for me and shed his blood for me on the cross for the
forgiveness of sins.

10. *Did the Father also die for you?*

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the
Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed his blood
for me.

11. *How do you know this?*

From the Holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament,
and by his body and blood given me as a pledge in the sacrament.

(12 we will skip over for now.)

13. *Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in
the Sacrament?*

Yes, I believe it.

14. What convinces you to believe this?

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

Now there is one more kind of question to ask ourselves:
DO I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM MADE CLEAN?

When Jesus washed the disciples' feet they could know
that now they were clean and ready to celebrate
because he who washed them did a good job.

They were all clean, not just their feet.

What made them all clean was not just what he did for them
on the outside but what he did for them inside.

What he did for them that night is what he does for us
each time we receive Communion & his forgiveness.

He truly washes us clean so we do not need to fear
or doubt his love for us or our eternal salvation.

What he has done for me is given me peace, joy & faith
and so spiritual strength as I begin again with a fresh start.

Sometimes when young music fans get to shake
the actual hand of their favorite music idol, in the flesh,
they don't want to wash that hand ever again

in order to preserve that special touch.

We are the opposite, when we get to receive
Jesus' body and blood, in the flesh, for our forgiveness,
we don't ever want to get dirty again.

We don't want the hand that held his body to do anything
or the mouth that drank his blood to say anything
that makes us unclean again.

We realize we will stumble, but we want to hold on to
his cleanliness.

A question I want to ask as I examine myself is
is I understand what Jesus does for me here?
Do I think God is a liar or do I believe that he has given me
Jesus' own body and blood and that I am forgiven?

When I truly believe this, what a difference it makes!
It is what gives me joy despite every trouble in life.

God's love for me is what makes me love him
and want to be with him, talk to him & listen to him.

God's forgiveness for me is what makes me patient
and forgiving toward other people in my life.

It is what gives me hope even in the midst of every loss
and gives me confidence even in the face of death.

Let's turn once more to the hymnal, page 329.

I will read questions 16 to 19 and read with you the answer.

16. Why should we remember and proclaim his death?

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so that we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so that we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.

18. Finally why do you wish to go to the sacrament?

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord
Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command,
encouragement, and promise are given.

Jesus said and did some things that are hard to understand.

Peter says Paul wrote some things hard to understand.

But Paul says he didn't write anything we can't understand.

And Jesus says the Holy Spirit will help us understand.

So Jesus says to us: Do you understand what I have done?

and Paul says: examine yourself to see if you understand.

DO I UNDERSTAND MY UNCLEANNESS?

I am a filthy sinner who needs to be made clean.

DO I UNDERSTAND HOW JESUS TOOK MY FILTH?

Jesus truly died for me to be forgiven and gives me
this forgiveness by giving me here his body & blood.

DO I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM MADE CLEAN?

Jesus word is what makes things true.

He truly forgives me so that I am clean
and so that I can live clean here & forever in heaven.