



After the winter that wouldn't end (and I'm not sure it has), we need to find solace and joy in the signs of spring. The other night I was on my deck and heard the sound of tree frogs croaking. It was like a joyous melody and cacophony of happiness. The continual sound was a symphony of spring to my ears. While walking into church last Sunday, I saw a multitude of crocuses erupting from the soil with their heads of yellow and purple standing erect toward the sun. It brought a smile to my face. Even when I am walking in my neighborhood, I delight in seeing all the spring wreaths that festoon the doors of my friends. There are the wreaths made of dried flowers and grasses; those made completely of jelly beans that are so tempting to the children in the household; and those made of Easter eggs either speckled or in their pastel colors.

Like these signs of spring, we have our Christian signs of Holy Week and Easter that also bring with them feelings of solace and joy. They carry with them cause for reflection, prayer and rejoicing. They are at the heart of who we are as Christians. They represent what we stand for as an "Easter people" and what we need to emulate as followers of Jesus.

I want to look at one of these signs and guide you through a brief reflection. So central to our faith is the celebration of Holy Thursday, the supper of the Lord. We are bombarded with signs and symbols during that liturgy, but the one I want to focus on is the washing of the feet. There is nothing that speaks more to the humility of Jesus than this simple act. Jesus had to humble himself, lower himself to the ground and touch the feet of his followers. The priest does the same during the Mass as a symbolic gesture of Jesus' act of love. Jesus tells us, "If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow so that as I have done for you, you should also do." (John 13:15)

Will we ever have occasion to wash someone's feet? Maybe, maybe not. The lesson we are taught here is that nothing is too basic or too menial for us to consider doing for our neighbor. Whatever we do out of love for our neighbor, we are doing in the name of Jesus. We are

following his example. It could be as simple as washing a baby's face, reading a Bible story to a young child, or cutting up food for an elderly person who has arthritis in her hands. These are not huge things, but when done out of love they become acts of meaning.

I am reminded of the words of Mother Teresa: "One need not do great things, but only small things with great love." Think about this. Or, ponder the words of Therese of Lisieux: "Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love."

Jesus has given us the example of his love. His greatest gift was dying for our sins on the cross of salvation. Let us die to ourselves and live for others. Let us follow Jesus---especially in the small ways that become big ways when done for Him.

Happy Easter!
Patricia Haggerty