

QUARANTINE REFLECTION 8 - Maundy Thursday

MAUNDY - it's quite an odd sounding word and one that we only ever hear in Holy Week or it might pop up in the odd crossword clue or quiz answer. It's origins however are from the Latin *mandatum*, - 'mandate, commandment'....

Something commanded

We will be familiar with the words *mandate* and *commandment*, we hear the words *mandate* most around elections and we understand *commandments* to be a strict rule. We have as a nation been very aware of following rules and following strict instructions and some of us have been finding them a bit difficult and frustrating, following rules often sound simple but the reality comes with a few problems. We don't all think the same, some of us follow the rules diligently some of us are natural challengers of rules and there are some who just don't think rules apply to them.

As Christians we are called to follow the same commandment that Jesus gave to his disciples on the evening of his last meal with his disciples - "A New command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." John 13: 34-35.

The observant amongst you will remember me using this verse on Tuesday.

Normally on Maundy Thursday Christians will either on their own or collectively come together to remember Jesus and his last evening with his friends before he was arrested and subsequently tried and executed.

That meal they shared was a Passover Meal, a meal of joy, where they celebrated God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt and all they ate and drank were symbols of that dramatic salvation.

Eating together up until recently was something I expect we all took for granted. Especially on an Easter weekend families and friends come together to celebrate in one form or another.

Jesus during the evening began to wash the disciples feet, an act that was usually performed by a servant but the disciples considered Jesus as their master so would have been odd. During the meal Jesus referred to the bread as his body and the wine that they drank as his blood and it is from this final upper room meal that we base our sacrament meals and remember the sacrificial act that Jesus was about to undertake.

For me it is a time where my shortcomings and my poor attempts at being a good disciple are highlighted. I know I am so often like Peter who has really good intention most of the time but somehow manages to often not get it quite right.

After the Passover meal Jesus takes himself and his disciples to the Mount of Olives to pray in a garden called Gethsemane.

He asks his friends to stay awake and pray with him through the night but they fell asleep, Jesus woke them up three times altogether while he prayed to God his Father - "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but your be done." - Luke 22:42

Jesus shouldered much that evening before and after his arrest and delivery to the authorities.

So we today think of all that Jesus bore and for me I am going to try so much more to not complain about things that really don't matter that much.

I am I think going to look at one of my favourite pictures which I am sharing today and I will reflect on the sacrifices that was made by Jesus and that is being made by many, many people in our country and across the world today. I am and I invite you to join with me to remember and pray for those people who each day face their own Gethsemane.

"For you O Lord have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living. (Psalm 116: 8-9)

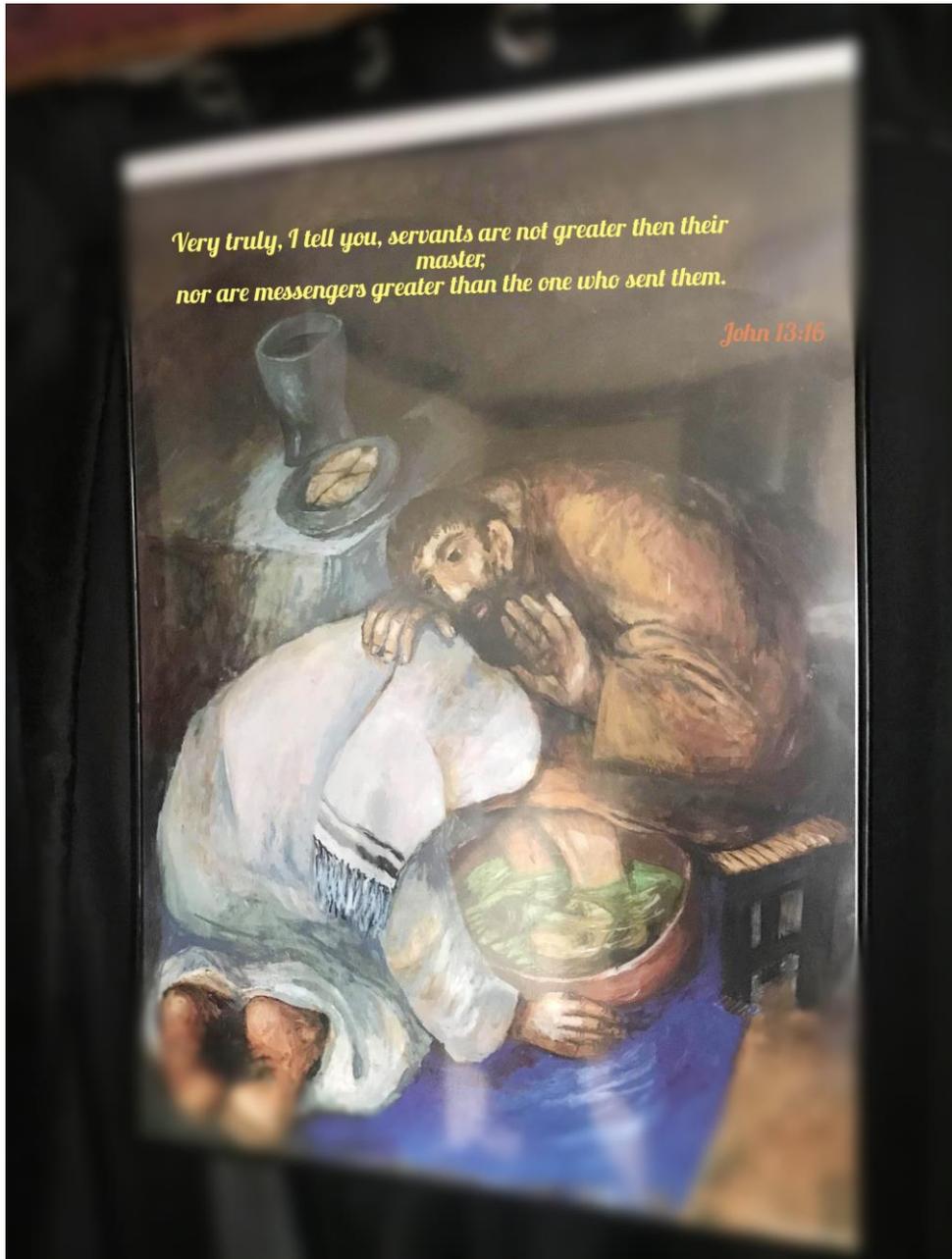


Image is 'Washing Of Feet 'by Sieger Koder and is one of his Folly of God Paintings.