

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Mar 28th 2013

Both of my parents were raised during the Depression, which led them both to be very expense conscious, despite my father being a professional. We were the last family in our neighborhood to get air-conditioning for our house and the last family to get a color TV! After I had been in the Jesuits for at least ten years, I was having dinner with my parents one evening. They ordered their entrees and for their appetizer, wanted to split an entrée between the two of them, but were told that there was a \$1 plate charge. My dad said, "Never mind." Also, my parents would use senior travel vouchers for their flights, which at times would result in three to even four segments for their trips. I would tease my dad in his later years, telling him that I have never seen a U-Haul attached to the hearse heading out to the cemetery. I told him not to worry about his children's inheritance, but to spend some money on himself.

Our Gospel passage from John for this Holy Thursday makes a reference to our inheritance. Peter is protesting Jesus' attempt to wash his feet. Jesus replies: "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Scripture scholars have dissected this passage through the centuries and have suggested at least two meanings of inheritance: One meaning, Eternal life, and the other meaning, humble service to others, something that all of the followers of Jesus are called to imitate.

Imitate Jesus, how? Well, through love, prayer and service. We all are called to love like Jesus. It is so easy to love most of the people in our lives, at least most of the time! But following Jesus, we are even called to love our enemies. Could you ever imagine doing that without hearing those words of Jesus? This is no easy task, but we must try our best to love everyone, even our enemies.

All of us have a longing for love and intimacy. On occasion we find ourselves empty. We are always tempted to fill our emptiness through unhealthy and even immoral living: overeating, drinking to excess, and the list goes on. Through prayer, we invite God into our lives, including the emptiness of our lives. We keep forgetting how much we need God and we also need to be ever thankful to God for all that we have and cherish in our lives.

Yet our lives can be such a paradox. We crave love and attention for ourselves which really gets us nowhere, and sometimes even in trouble. We always need to remind ourselves that it is not all about us, but it is really about others! When you think about it, we are most satisfied, most fulfilled when we help to meet the needs of others. We are called to be humble and act by serving others. We are called to follow the example of Jesus in the Washing of the Feet.

On this Holy Thursday, we reenact the Washing of the Feet and celebrate the Last Supper of Jesus. Let us pray for the grace that you and I can imitate Jesus more fully, especially in our humble service to others, and give praise to God for the gift of our inheritance of Eternal Life.

By the way, after my dad turned 85, he started flying First Class!

Timothy R. Lannon, S.J.