**Jesus Has Left Us to Be Servants of Each Other, Says Pope Francis at Mass of Lord's Supper**

**Washes Feet of 12 Marginalized During Tonight's Ceremony**

ROME, April 17, 2014 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org/?utm_campaign=dailyhtml&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dispatch)) - Pope Francis decided, for the second year in a row, to celebrate the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, which begins the Easter Triduum, with the marginalized. This year he chose St. Mary of Providence of the Don Gnocchi Foundation in Rome, a center for the elderly and disabled.

His choice shows continuity with last year's ceremony at a sister centre since again this year the Pontiff visited this Casal del Marmo area of Rome, where he celebrated Mass last Holy Thursday at a youth detention center, with its young inmates.

Recalling the institution of the Eucharist and Christ’s words to the apostles to be at the service of God’s people, the Mass of our Lord’s Supper symbolizes service in washing the feet of twelve individuals.

Director of the Vatican press office, Father Federico Lombardi, confirmed nine Italians, one Muslim from Libya, an Ethiopian woman, and a young man from Cape Verde constituted the 12 whose feet will be washed. Each of the individuals suffer with some form of illness.

A Vatican Radio interview in which Linda Bordoni, of Vatican Radio, spoke to expert physicist Dr. Furio Grammatica, chair of the Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer (CITT) at the Don Gnocchi Foundation, emphasized that the foundation, which has 30 centres throughout Italy dedicated to healthcare and research, epitomizes Pope Francis’ repeated message, namely that of “moving out to the margins” to find and help those who often are “forgotten” or “discarded.”

During the interview, Dr. Furio Grammatica acknowledged that although she and the foundation, which has been providing help for more than 60 years, always realized Francis was a “supporter” of their cause, “Once they realized ‘the Pope really decided to visit us in a so important and symbolic occasion – we all thought ‘too fantastic to be true.’”

Dr. Grammatica clarified that although some thought their guests “cannot fully catch the meaning of the visit,” this is “definitely not true.” She attributed this to a “clear ‘sixth sense’” guests have about “how much they are loved." She noted the sentiment of those guests for Pope Francis as “not only a Pope, but a icon of the tenderness and strength at the same time, so they are really excited in view of meeting the Pope.”

The foundation spokeswoman noted that Lent “reminds us the meaning of solitude, weakness, doubts, being tired or confused. Let me say, to see the Pope coming at our workplace means anticipating a bit the Easter for us!”

Legacy

When Francis gave his homily at the foundation today, he spoke of the Lord and how, “although He is God,” he “became a servant, our servant.” This gesture, he said, left the faithful with an inheritance that we “ought to be servants of one another.”

“He has made this road for love, you also ought to love and be servants and love. This is the legacy that Jesus leaves us," said the Pope.

The Holy Father stated the Jesus wanted us to live in this way and emphasized that the act of washing the feet is a symbolic gesture.

He explained the act was done by the slaves, the servants of those who came to dine, the people who came to lunch due to the fact that, at that time, walking on the streets of dirt and earth created this issue that when guests "entered into the house, it was necessary to wash their feet." The entire homily focused on the reflection of Jesus doing the "service of a slave" and the legacy he left.

Emphasizing how Jesus’ example then ties into our present Eucharistic tradition Francis said: "And for this reason, the Church, today, we commemorate the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Eucharist, is also in the ceremony, this act of washing the feet, which reminds us that we must be servants to each other."

Inviting the faithful to think of others and to remember the love that Jesus tells us to have for others, he urged the faithful to think of how they can serve others better, for this is what Jesus wanted us to do.

Pope Francis, during the rite this evening, knelt in front of the 12 disabled. Just as Jesus did for his disciples, Francis washed, dried, and kissed their feet. (D.C.L.)