

A DIFFERENT MEAL

(John 13:1-35)



We were all there that evening. No one was missing.
It seemed to all of us that that meal—our last one together—
was different from the previous ones....

A strange sensation of joy and sorrow,
fear and hope, pervaded our hearts.

Jesus was acting like someone preparing for a definitive departure.
He gave the impression of wanting to leave the best of himself
with those he had always loved.

We looked at one another... What was going on?

Jesus rose from the table, slowly removed his garments,
tied a towel around his waist and picked up a basin of water.
What was he doing? He wanted to wash our feet? That was crazy!
Even a slave shouldn't be asked to do that!
No! Stop! It's too much!

Master! Teacher! How can you wash our feet?

How can you want to wash *our* feet
—the feet of those who were ready to deny you, betray you,
reject your love, suffocate your light and your truth?
Jesus, is your love for us so boundless
that it brings you down to the level of our feet?

God became a human being and that human being became a slave
—a slave who washed the feet of his loved ones,
offering them a little hospitality.

Jesus, we didn't understand what you were doing.
You gave us a taste of communion, your Bread of Love,
but we preferred to sell you for a few dollars.
One of us whom you loved, perhaps every single one of us
—those whom you washed and fed—betrayed you, rejected your love.
Free to do this, we chose ourselves. We chose death.

But you know us, Jesus. You wanted to mark us indelibly
with your forgiveness and thus defend us from ourselves.
That evening your forgiveness cleansed us. You offered us bread,
overcame our betrayal and gave us life. Amen.

