



# Family Prayer Ritual Tuesday of Holy Week

## We love and serve each other

□ Introduction parents feel free to use these words or your own

### The Foot Washing Ritual or Mandatum

Due to the climate in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, it was common for people to wear sandals or go bare-foot while doing their daily activities. Feet got hot and dirty. Foot-washing, like eating and sleeping, became an essential daily activity that one could not do without, much like washing our hands is for us. When guests came to your home for a visit, it was customary to wash their feet as an expression of hospitality and welcome. It served not only to clean their feet but it also to cool them off and make them more comfortable. It was a tender gesture, show others you cared about them.

Over time, this act of hospitality was replaced by having the host provide his/her guests with a bowl of water and a towel so they could wash their own feet and hands before coming into the house. Only the very rich could afford to have to have servants to wash their feet and the feet of their guests. The gesture became less an honorable expression of love and more a lowly task of servitude fit only for slaves and the lowest ranking household servants.

According to the scripture, at the Last Supper Jesus combines the meanings of this ritual washing, to be both an act of love and an act of humility (John 13:1-17) . He shows his disciples by washing their feet how much he loves them. He teaches them that they are to be hospitable and welcoming of others, just as God has welcomed them. On Holy Thursday, during the Mass of the Last Supper, we engage in this beautiful the ritual. We do this in imitation of Jesus, following his example to love others with humility and tenderness.

The ritual for our prayer this day will be to have our hands washed.



“Do you understand what I have done for you? Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” John 13: 12; 14

- ❑ **Make the Sign of the Cross**
- ❑ **Light your Christ Candle** saying,  
Leader: **Christ is our light!**  
All: **Thanks be to God**
- ❑ **[CLICK HERE](#)** to read John 13:1-17
- ❑ **The Washing of Hands**

Couples wash and dry each other’s hands and then parents wash and dry the hands of each child.

- While washing say: **My/our love for you grows each and every day.**
- While drying say: **Now go and share that love with others and be filled with joy.**

If you want, you can play music in the background while you are washing your children’s hands. Below are some suggestions.

- **[CLICK HERE](#)** to hear, I Have Loved You
  - **[CLICK HERE](#)** hear By Our Love – Tom Kendzia
  - **[CLICK HERE](#)** to hear Go Make a Difference
- ❑ **Closing Prayer** - When everyone hands have been washed, join hands and pray the **Our Father** together



Now as then, deep love is expressed in the small acts of tenderly tending to each other’s needs.