

Sermon for Maundy Thursday, Year C, 2007
5.iv.07, 7:30 p.m., Easter Triduum I: Mass of the Lord's Supper
Corporate Confession & Forgiveness, Foot Washing, Holy Eucharist
Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14, Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-17, 31b-35

J. J. !

Grace to you and peace from Him Who is and Who
was and Who is to come! ✠ Amen.

**I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.**

**By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you
have love for one another."**

-- John 13:34,35

In the First Century, a conflation of the earliest non-Christian observations of Christianity reported to the Roman government would read something like this:
'They gather together at sunrise on the first day of the week, sing some prayers, take a vow not to do evil, eat a sacrifice of bread and wine which they believe to

be the body and blood of their God, Chrestus, and go on their way.' Those like Emperor Nero, who wanted to add some negative spin to these reports so as to use the Christians as a scape-goat, put out the story of the 'blood libel,' the rumor that Christians kidnapped little pagan children and used them in their sacrifice.

Despite those lies—lies that later Christians would evilly and tragically apply to the Jews—a certain truth of Christianity shone through. By the Second Century it was impossible for anyone to ignore the vast network of social welfare the Christians were establishing and managing, all from private donations, so that the poor, the widows and orphans, the sick, the lame and the insane of the capital and nearly all the major cities of the Roman Empire were being cared for

not by the Roman State, but by the Catholic Christian Church. The rest is history, as they say.

We are part of the rest of the Christian story, in our small way, in our little community. This congregation has not been and is not without its detractors. There are those who place an evil construction on just about anything we do and the way we do it, whether that is worship or teaching or fellowship. There is no possibility of 'damage control' as the politicians try to manage their image after saying something regrettable. The Church has never been very interested in damage control anyway. The one thing that should concern us is this: The object lesson of service out of sheer *love* which our Lord gave the Apostles, the *fellowship* of this Altar which He

instituted and in which He commands us to participate, ought to be discernable in the way we treat one another and in the way we care for those in our community, most especially those who cannot return our kindness. That is all we can do. That is all we are called to do, keeping this new commandment whereby Our Lord instituted this Holy Supper.

✠ Amen.



Now to Him Who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made of us a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever. ✠ Amen.

