

MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL CARDIFF
24TH MARCH 2016
ARCHBISHOP GEORGE STACK

This morning, the Queen distributed Maundy money to ninety men and ninety women at St. George's Chapel Windsor. Ninety because that is her age. Maundy money because it takes the monarch back to the care and the service of the poor which Maundy Thursday commemorates.

The word "Maundy" comes from "Mandatum" meaning "command". Jesus gives a new commandment at the Last Supper, that we should love one another as he loves us. Actions speak louder than words. He kneels down in front of his disciples and washes their feet as a sign of his love.

I once knew an outstanding headteacher in London who turned around a large secondary school. He was then granted early retirement. I asked him what he was going to do with his spare time. He told me he was going to train as a chiropodist. Seeing the look of surprise on my face, he said, *"When you kneel at the feet of an elderly, sick or frail person, you realise the fragility of life. It teaches you the respect and dignity with which we should treat one another"*.

"If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet". (Jn. 13:14)

But Jesus goes further than this. He takes bread. He takes wine. This is me. My Body. My blood. This is the sign, the sacrament of the sacrifice I am to make of my life on Calvary tomorrow. *"Greater love has no man than he lay down his life for his friends". (Jn 15:13)* We had an extraordinary example of this truth in

the tragic drowning of a family in Donegal this week. The father escaped from the sinking car and managed to give his baby to a rescuer. Then he got back into the car to be with the rest of his family as they drowned.

We re-present, re-member these truths on every Sunday when we come together for Mass. St. Paul puts it so well in his letter to the Christians at Corinth:

“This is what I received from the Lord and in turn passed on to you. That on the night he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and thanked God for it and broke it and said “this is my body which is for you”. And with the wine “This is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as a memorial of me”

As we commemorate the precious gift of Jesus himself in Holy Communion, we make our own the words of St. Paul:

“Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death”.