

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

Ignatian Meditation Guides by Bill Gaultiere

Introduction to Ignatian Meditation

In Ignatius' 16th century approach to Scripture instead of analyzing a text, you use your senses to imagine yourself as a character in the story. Then you have a short, personal conversation with the Lord. Each reading is guided by a focus question below. In a group context follow the leader's instructions on what to share and be sure to protect people's confidentiality.

Background to the Text

This Gospel reading in *The Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius is in Week Three which focuses on the passion of Christ. John shows Jesus at the high point of his earthly ministry: he's raised Lazarus from the dead, crowds of people hail him as the Messiah as he rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, and at the feast the Father speaks audibly in a thunderous voice affirming him (John 11-12). Now the disciples and everyone are expecting Jesus to exert his power and authority as Israel's Messiah-Deliverer. So what a shock it is for the Twelve at their private Passover Feast with the Lord when he takes the posture of a lowly servant and washes their dirty feet! Not only had none of them done this, they had argued about which of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Jesus shows them that true teachers and leaders are humble servants.

Ask For the Grace

Father God, I desire the grace of sorrow, regret, and confusion because of my sins that send Jesus to the cross.

Imagine Scripture: John 13

1-2 Just before the Passover Feast, Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world to go to the Father. Having loved his dear companions, he continued to love them right to the end. It was suppertime. The Devil by now had Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, firmly in his grip, all set for the betrayal.

3-6 Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, "Master, *you* wash *my* feet?"

7 Jesus answered, "You don't understand now what I'm doing, but it will be clear enough to you later."

8 Peter persisted, "You're not going to wash my feet—ever!"

Jesus said, "If I don't wash you, you can't be part of what I'm doing."

9 "Master!" said Peter. "Not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!"

10-12 Jesus said, "If you've had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you're clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. So now you're clean. But not every one of you." (He knew who was betraying him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you.") After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table.

12-17 Then he said, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Master,' and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other's feet. I've laid down a pattern for you. What I've done, you do. I'm only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master; an employee doesn't give orders to the employer. If you understand what I'm telling you, act like it—and live a blessed life (MSG).

Prayer / Journaling / Soul Talk Prompts

1. Visualize yourself in the Gospel. Don't seek intellectual insights—stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with or are you a bystander?
2. Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?