

March 20

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Maundy Thursday

My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. (John 13:10) *"Scripture taken from The Message. Copyright ? 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group."* biblegateway.com/versions/?action=getVersionInfo&vid=65

Peterson gratuitously adds this sentence to the translation of the familiar story of Jesus washing the disciples feet - I'm not certain my mother would get it.

My mother was (is) a fanatic for clean - no hand washing in the kitchen sink: that's for food; always wash before meals; iron the underclothes to sanitize them; wash after you use the toilet; don't put you fingers in your mouth: that transmits germs; etc. etc. etc.

While I was growing up these things seemed 'normal.' Then I was exposed to people who never had my training and they thought I was fastidious. I kept wondering where she got this stuff. Slowly I realized two major sources: her training as a nurse (she always found doctors way too lax with their hygiene in the office), and soap commercials (the 1930's were the heyday of all things on radio being sponsored by the soap manufacturers (to wit - 'soap operas'). It just came naturally to her.

I find this doubly curious in the last decade after the bird flu, nose swabbing, advice about avoiding the flu - all the things my mother taught me are so automatic they cover all the advice I get!

Hygiene - yes. Holiness - ? Jesus cared about caked mud between the toes. Jesus cared about dust pounded into the pores. Jesus cared about scrapes and bruises on the heel. Jesus cared about strained muscles in the arch. And caked filth in our hearts. And useless dust filling our minds. And deep scrapes and bruises in our souls. And strained relations with the loved ones around us. Plus the mud walls we've thrown up against God. Plus the hazy fog we've put between ourselves and God. Plus the well-nurtured grievances we carry to hold against God. Plus the strain we put on God's willing and loving offer of friendship to us.

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

A Way to Pray – A bath

- How long can you soak – and enjoy it?
- What gets in your way of staying longer?
- How long can you soak in God's love for you?