

April 7, 2006

Washing of feet on Holy Thursday

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Each year at this time, we receive inquiries at the diocesan Pastoral Center regarding the Holy Thursday evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, specifically about whether or not the particular directive in the Sacramentary regarding the washing of men's feet has changed.

There has not been any directive from Rome regarding a change for the Holy Thursday Mass in that regard.

A change in practice from that which is given in the Sacramentary for the Holy Thursday liturgy requires the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to request a "recognitio" from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments, as outlined in canon 838§3 and "Redemptionis Sacramentum" nn. 27, 28.

The washing of feet ceremony at the Holy Thursday Mass is an option that the celebrant is allowed to exercise if it is deemed advisable or recommended for pastoral reasons ("ubi ratio pastoralis id suadeat").

I will remember all of you in my prayers as we approach the Easter Triduum.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Most Rev. Peter J. Jugis, J.C.D.
Bishop of Charlotte