

For centuries, people have been fascinated with what Jesus may have looked like. In art form, we see Jesus depicted in a number of different ways, from a blue-eyed blond hair European Jesus to the African image that hangs on our processional cross. Perhaps it's a good thing that we don't have an actual image of Jesus because it allows us to see Jesus in a way that speaks to us.

A better question for us to ponder is "What was Jesus like? Our scriptures paint an image of Jesus as a person who loved people, who had a tender heart for those who were struggling. Jesus spent his public ministry healing the sick, feeding the hungry, forgiving the sinner, and gathering the lost and forsaken.

In our gospel reading today, we heard the accounting of the Last Supper found in Mark's gospel. Knowing what was about to transpire with his crucifixion, Jesus chose to spend his last few hours with his friends, giving them hope, explaining to them how he wanted to be remembered – in the breaking of the bread. Jesus gives the gift of himself – take and eat this bread, my body which is given up for you. Drink of this cup, my blood outpoured. This is how Jesus wants us to remember him, pouring himself out for us, nourishing us, loving us to the very end.

On this feast of Corpus Christi, or the Body and Blood of Jesus, our gospel reading focuses on the institution of the Eucharist. While we heard from Mark's gospel this morning, I want to turn to John's gospel where we find Jesus washing the feet of his disciples before eating a meal together.

In John's gospel we find Jesus on his knees, wiping away dust and dirt from the feet of his friends, his followers. We find Jesus doing something a teacher of his day would never dream of doing – kneeling before his students. Washing feet was a job that was left to a servant or the one with lowest rank. Yet Jesus assumed that role to show us how we too should behave. If we want to have greatness, we have to be willing to serve, to be humble.

In John's gospel, it is interesting to note that the focus is more on the example of service than on the breaking of the bread; the bread and wine that are transformed into the very body and blood of Jesus. When we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, we too are transformed into the Body of Christ, and Jesus is showing us what it means to be Christ like – what it means to be the Body of Christ.

Think about it! Knowing what he would face in a few short hours, Jesus choose to spend his last moments on earth showing his friends how much he loved them; how much he cared. He set his fear aside and embraced those around him. Jesus tenderly reached out his hands and removed the dust and dirt from their feet.

As we ponder this image of Jesus, imagine ourselves sitting in a chair with Jesus tenderly washing our feet, washing away all that clings to us – our failings, our sins, our weaknesses. Imagine being washed clean in God's love. That is the image Jesus wanted to leave with us. After washing their feet, Jesus told those gathered – “do for one another as I have done for you.”

The Eucharist is an awesome gift that God has given to us. I'm sure you have heard the old adage: “You are what you eat.” Remember that when you approach the altar today to receive the Body and Blood of Christ – you are what you eat! You are called to be Christ to one another, you are called to give sight to the blind, to heal the broken hearted, to welcome the stranger, to love the lost and rejected, to forgive those who've wronged you. You are called to bring Christ's love to the world around you. You, my friends, never forget are what you eat!