



## MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28

---

Jesus said to them,  
“Do you know what I have done to you?  
You call me Teacher and Lord—  
and you are right for that is what I am.  
So if I, your Lord and Teacher,  
have washed your feet,  
you also ought to wash one another’s feet.  
For I have set you an example,  
that you also should do as I have done to you.”

— John 13:12-15

In the late eighteenth century, as the Industrial Revolution swept through England, the Christian visionary and poet William Blake (1757-1827) wrote “Holy Thursday” (in *Songs of Experience*), a bitter indictment of the English religious, political and economic establishment.

*Is this a holy thing to see  
In a rich and fruitful land,  
Babes reduced to misery,  
Fed with cold and usurous hand?*

In Blake’s time as in ours, rapid technological change produced unprecedented wealth and devastating poverty. In his time as in ours, well-meaning schemes were hatched to alleviate human misery without disturbing the economic status quo. In his time as in ours, some of those providing aid believed that they should place certain conditions upon those who received it.

On Maundy Thursday, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. It was a reversal so profound that we still struggle to imitate it, even

momentarily. As Jesus washes the feet of those who called him Master, he leads us away from power, prestige and the exercise of authority to which we might believe our experience or expertise entitles us. Jesus calls us to serve without reference or regard to our own need for power or recognition.

Blake's last stanza reads,

*For where'er the sun does shine,  
And where'er the rain does fall,  
Babes can never hunger there,  
Nor poverty the mind appall.*

May we more fully serve God's mission by ensuring that every child be fed and nourished and loved on every level—physical, emotional and spiritual. We can do no less.

— Gay Clark Jennings