

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME:



SERVICE WITH LOVE

Jesus came amongst us as a servant, giving us salvation and showing the way of holiness. One of the most significant signs he gave to us of his servant heart was washing the apostles' feet at the last supper. In the time of Jesus and still today, this is considered the lowly work of the most menial of servants, in ages past often done by slaves. Jesus lowered himself even to perform this act of humility and service to show us how we are to live as his disciples. By this act, he lowered himself, but raised all servants, even the forgotten slaves, and exalted everyday service and menial tasks to the work of the divine.

We are called to be servants like Jesus in our daily lives. The act of humility of Jesus, the master and supreme teacher, washing the feet of his disciples, directs us to recognize the call to acknowledge divine grace working through our daily lives.

Especially in our time, living in relatively well-off countries, we should recognize the everyday Christian heroes who serve as they should. In our time with so many attacks on family life, with media bombarding our senses and tempting the youth, it is the everyday faithful souls I would call my heroes.

Who are these "everyday" heroes? I would point to parents who raise their children with discipline, sacrifice, prayers, and the call to service, while



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witnessing in their lives these virtues, and be open to large families if the Lord so graces to them. I would point toward youth who live lives of discipline, sacrificial giving, modesty, and chastity. I would point toward faithful parish priests, who minister with perseverance, prayers, and a witness of humility. These souls may not always get the headlines, and their lives may not be dramatic, but they represent the call to service in daily life.

Throughout Church history, there have been such faithful souls, some of whom are now canonized, and more recently, we can recognize some saintly lay professionals who showed noble witnesses of service in their time. In ages past, one can look toward the example of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, a noble woman, queen of the land, who chose to humble herself to serve people experiencing poverty and clothe them with her very hands. Choosing a poor religious life after the death of her noble husband, she renounced all titles. One can consider the example of St. Louis, King of France,

a mighty king, who led a great army that was renowned for his care for the poor, his attentiveness to just administration, and his attentiveness to decorating Churches. As he testified in his letters, his greatest desire for his children was that they would not commit mortal sin even if it meant their whole kingdom.

One can consider the Catholic physicist and philosopher of science, Pierre Duhem, who devoted his genius to investigating the foundations of modern science in response to atheistic philosophers. Duhem used his keen intellect to show the wisdom of Christian inspiration, which inspired man to study the laws of nature systematically, giving way to the scientific endeavor among Christian-inspired intellectuals.

One can consider the medical doctors, St. Giuseppe Muscatt, St. Gianna Molla Beratti, and Ven. Jerome Lejeune, who gave themselves in service to others. St. Giuseppe was known as a doctor for the poor and outcasts in Italy. St. Gianna turned away from medical procedures during her pregnancy to save the life of her unborn child. Venerable. Jerome Lejeune, who discovered the gene that causes Down syndrome, went on the stand for the dignity

of all unborn life, inspired Catholic bioethics, and started a clinic to embrace children with special needs in the face of a European culture from the 1960s that scorned much of his witness.

One can consider the example of St. Carlo Acutis, who, with a smile, witnessing with chastity and a compassionate heart, reached out to the poor, evangelized other youth, and used his computer skills to evangelize the world about the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and devotion to Mother Mary, who appeared in so many apparitions. Or Joe Wilson in Scotland, who died at 17 in 2011, devoted to Our Lady, inspired other young people to see holiness as real through a simple life of joyful service to others and concern for the poor.

These servant saints of ages past and recent witnesses continue to embody the call to image Jesus as the humble servant who lowered themselves to do even the menial tasks out of love for the Lord. This Holy Thursday, as you witness again the ritual reenactment of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, recognize in this liturgy the call for you to be an everyday servant, an everyday hero. ■