



HOLY WEDNESDAY

The Lord Washed the Disciples' Feet

THE HYMN

Matins Service on Holy Wednesday Evening

"The Lord, who made the lakes, and the springs and the oceans, instructing us in finest humility, girded himself with a towel and then He washed the Disciples' feet. He was humble thus, in His surpassing compassion, and He lifted us up from the pit of perdition, for He alone loves mankind."

THE SERMON

Ultimate Humility and Love

Throughout our parishes, we typically conduct the Sacrament of Holy Unction in the afternoon of Holy Wednesday. In keeping with the tradition of the Church, the service of Matins for Holy Thursday takes place later in the evening of Holy Wednesday. In the hymns of Matins, we hear how Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, gathers His disciples for the mystical supper. Before eating, the Master wraps a towel around His waist, and washes the disciples' feet, in an act of ultimate humility and love.

The Lord who created the lakes, the springs, and the oceans, instructs us in perfect humility by His example. He wants to show the apostles that His ministry in the world is a ministry of sacrifice, love, and humble service. Of course, this is a lesson that is just as relevant to the Church today and to all of the successors to the apostles throughout the ages. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, out of abundant compassion and love for humankind, continues to point to humility as the sure path to salvation.



**GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA**
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

All of us who are baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity are disciples of Christ and His apostles. Clergy and laity alike, we are all called to proclaim the Gospel and minister to others. With the washing of the disciples' feet, the Lord sets out the fundamental character of our ministry in the world. Selfishness may have led us out of paradise. But humility directs us back to God's embrace. Let us do what we can to strive for humility.

Every day we struggle to cope with prideful thoughts and selfish feelings. We are tempted to think we are better than others, forgetting that we are all children of God. And if we have different talents and charismas, these have been given to us by God. Let us complement each other, instead of competing with one another. When we are overtaken by pride, jealousy, or malice, we forget the importance of our salvation. Through humility, we draw on God's mercy. We share in His Grace and His power to can even perform miracles. We become the light of this world. Many saints of the Church taught people and attracted souls to Christ, not with their words but with their way of life. With their simplicity, kindness, and love. They became saints by virtue of their everyday practical humility.

Christ, as the Son of God, shows complete obedience to the Father. He is humbled. He becomes man so that we may reach God. The apostles of Christ left everything behind. With humility, they proclaimed the Gospel so that the message of salvation could be heard throughout the world. We are also called to place humility in the center of our lives. We do not have to prove to anyone who we are. God knows the disposition of our hearts and how we truly live. "[H]e who humbles himself will be exalted." Let us retreat from the danger of submitting to evil. Let us adorn our lives with the virtue of humility. "[L]et us commend ourselves and one another" to God and His will with complete confidence.