

11. WASHING OF THE FEET

Please see the following Decree by Cardinal Robert Sarah, the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of Sacraments:

CONGREGATIO DE CULTU DIVINO ET DISCIPLINA SACRAMENTORUM

Prot. N. 87/15 DECREE

The restoration of Holy Week, with the decree *Maxima Redemptionis nostrae mysteria* (30 November 1955), granted the faculty for the washing of feet of twelve men during the Mass of the Lord's Supper after the reading of the Gospel according to John, where a pastoral reason recommended it, in order to Demonstrate in an almost representative way the humility and charity of Christ towards his disciples.

In the Roman Liturgy this rite was handed down with the name of the Mandatum of the Lord concerning fraternal charity from the words of Jesus (cf Jhn 13:34), which are sung in an Antiphon during the celebration.

In performing this rite Bishops and priests are invited to intimately conform themselves to Christ who came not to be served but to serve (Mt 20:28) and, compelled by charity to the end (Jhn 31:1), to give his life for the salvation of the whole human race.

In order that the full meaning of this rite might be expressed to those who participate it seemed good to the Supreme Pontiff Pope Francis to vary the norm which is found in the rubrics of the Missale Romanum (p. 300 n. 11): The men who have been chosen are led by the ministers..., which therefore must be changed as follows: Those who are chosen from amongst the people of God are led by the ministers... (and consequently in the *Caeremoniali Episcoporum* no. 301 and n. 299b: seats for those chosen), so that pastors may select a small group of the faithful to represent the variety and the unity of each part of the people of God. Such small groups can be made up of men and women, and it is appropriate that they consist of people young and old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated men and women and laity.

This Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in virtue of the faculties granted by the Supreme Pontiff, introduces this innovation into the liturgical books of the Roman Rite, reminding pastors of their responsibility to adequately instruct both the chosen faithful as well as all others so that they may participate consciously, actively and fruitfully in the rite.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 6 January 2016, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

Arthur Roche
Archbishop Secretary

It was proposed that the Parish Priests discuss this topic at their PPC meetings and take a pastoral decision to implement the call given by Pope Francis. As stated in the Decree, 'pastors of their responsibility to adequately instruct both the chosen faithful as well as all others so that they may participate consciously, actively and fruitfully in the rite'. Please explain to the faithful that today, in our churches, women do the readings, recite prayer of the faithful, and women religious distribute communion. *The faithful's conviction depends on the effective explanation of the parish clergy.*