



OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

Archdiocese of Newark

Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper Foot Washing

Below please find the English translation of the Congregation for Divine Worship decree as released January 21, 2016, permitting the washing of feet of "men and women, and ideally of the young and the old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated persons and laypeople" at the Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

The reform of the Holy Week, by the decree *Maxima Redemptionis nostrae mysteria* of November 1955, provides the faculty, where counselled by pastoral motives, to perform the washing of the feet of twelve men during the Mass of the Lord's Supper, after the reading of the Gospel according to John, as if almost to represent Christ's humility and love for His disciples.

In the Roman liturgy this rite was handed down with the name of the Mandatum of the Lord on brotherly charity in accordance with Jesus' words, sung in the Antiphon during the celebration.

In performing this rite, bishops and priests are invited to conform intimately to Christ who 'came not to be served but to serve' and, driven by a love 'to the end', to give His life for the salvation of all humankind.

To manifest the full meaning of the rite to those who participate in it, the Holy Father Francis has seen fit to change the rule by in the Roman Missal (p.300, No. 11) according to which the chosen men are accompanied by the ministers, which must therefore be modified as follows: 'Those chosen from among the People of God are accompanied by the ministers' (and consequently in the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* No. 301 and No. 299 b referring to the seats for the chosen men, so that pastors may choose a group of faithful representing the variety and unity of every part of the People of God. This group may consist of men and women, and ideally of the young and the old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated persons and laypeople.

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