**The Very Revd Dominic Barrington, Dean of York, reflects on John 13.31-35 for the Fifth Sunday of Easter, 18th May.**

A reading from the Gospel according to John. ‘When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the Jews, so now I say to you, where I am going, you cannot come. I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this, everyone will know that you were my disciples if you have love for one another.”’

Some scholars writing about the fourth gospel have an idea that it may be intended to be heard as a collection of sermons on the life of Jesus for an established Christian community, probably written near the end of the first century. That might be a useful lens for this Sunday's gospel reading. We are at a strange, an interesting point in our Eastertide journey because suddenly, as you will have noticed, we have jumped back to before the cross - jumped back to the Last Supper.

Jesus in John, of course, does not give us the details of bread and wine being shared. In John, instead, uniquely, we get the story of the washing of feet. And after this particular and very powerful acted-out symbol, Judas then goes out into the night, into the darkness, to betray Jesus. And that is the curtain raiser for the passage that I just read, which will be read across all our churches this Sunday.

It may well be the case that for the evangelist, the way this is reported and recorded what we've just heard is his way of emphasising to the Christian community what it means to share God's love. “Just as I have loved you,” says Jesus, his hands possibly still wet from having washed their feet. A powerful, scandalous example of service. You will remember that Peter initially is quite horrified that Jesus should wash his feet. But that kind of scandalous, world-turned-upside-down service is how the Church is called to love.

It has been a joy to celebrate the election of Pope Leo XIV, a remarkable man in many, many ways; the first dual citizen to occupy the papacy, an American, also a Peruvian, who spent many years in a very poor part of that country doing the equivalent of washing feet, working in rural areas, concerned about child malnutrition and other major social problems. This is the person elected to the papacy, and that might give Christians around the world of all denominations a little nudge as we hear the Gospel read on Sunday. This kind of loving service is the love to which the risen Christ calls us. Let's just make sure we hear that call, and we act it out in our own Christian communities.

Let us pray. Loving God, so bind us together in your love that we never fail to serve the world around us and show the love that we have received to all those around us. In Jesus’s name, Amen.