

DIOCESE OF TYLER

**ALVARO CORRADA DEL RIO, S.J.**  
**By the Grace of God and the Apostolic See**  
**BISHOP OF TYLER**

**DECREE**

**CONCERNING THE "WASHING OF THE FEET" RITUAL OF THE HOLY THURSDAY**

That for the preservation of the ancient tradition in the Roman Catholic Church and in accord with *Paschale Solemnitatis*, Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts from the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, twelve men (males only) will be chosen for the "Washing of the Feet" during the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

It has been the common and constant understanding of the Church that the Holy Thursday liturgy represents three realities: (1) the institution of the ministerial priesthood; (2) the institution of the Holy Eucharist and (3) the "Mandatum" given to the Twelve Apostles.

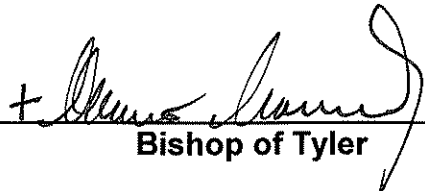
In the context of the Holy Thursday liturgy, the ritual of washing the feet of men suggests the strong connection between Christ's washing His Apostles feet and the institution of the Eucharist and Holy Orders

Christ chose on this occasion the twelve men he had chosen to be Apostles. We must conclude, then, that the ritual is intimately connected to the priesthood and the institution of the Eucharist. Its symbolism cannot be reduced to a general theme of service to the whole Church.

The celebrant of the Holy Thursday liturgy removes his chasuble and washes the feet of a select number of men, *virii selecti*, as the rubric demands. By this rubric, the Church reflects most appropriately the sacramental emphasis of this liturgy act.

Effective Lent 2011, I am asking that all parishes, missions and institutions that the priest wash the feet of a select group of men only. Any practice to the contrary is to be discontinued, especially other types of "washing" rituals, washing of hands etc. The practice of having the congregation wash each other's feet is also to be discontinued.

**Given this day, March 10, 2010.**

  
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**Bishop of Tyler**

  
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**Ecclesiastical Notary**