
DIOCESE OF RICHMOND
GUIDELINES FOR THE HOLY THURSDAY *MANDATUM*: THE WASHING OF THE FEET

Following the guidelines of the USCCB, in the Diocese of Richmond the presider may wash the feet of both men and women, and the number is not restricted to 12.*

"The washing of the feet of chosen men..." from the Vatican *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*, does not specify a number and thus allows parishes to choose how many they wish. In the United States, that number may include men and women. The adaptation of the foot-washing rite, approved by the USCCB Bishops Committee on the Liturgy is still in force:

"4. ... It has become customary in many places to invite both men and women to be participants in this rite in recognition of the service that should be given by all the faithful to the Church and to the world. Thus in the In the United States, a variation of the rite developed in which not only charity is signified but also humble service.

5. While this variation may differ from the rubric in the Sacramentary which mentions only men (viri selecti) it may nevertheless be said that the intention to emphasize service along with charity in the celebration of the rite is an understandable way of accentuating the evangelical command of the Lord, "who came to serve and not be served," that all members of the Church must serve one another in love." (BCL Newsletter, Feb. 1987)

"This is the latest statement of this Secretariat on the question. No subsequent legislation or instructions have necessitated a modification in the statement."

The entire Guidelines of the USCCB may be found at: <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/q&a/general/feet.shtml>

*After that, the washing of the feet of others by members of the community is a pastoral adaptation, to be done judiciously.