



## The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

### Sermon: Year C – Maundy Thursday – April 18, 2019: Uncle Ken

Tonight we gather together in this cathedral to blend time, to fold time, and to be with Jesus and the disciples in the Upper Room where during supper, Jesus puts a towel around his waist and kneels down to wash his disciples' feet.

And when we think about what might be going on here, maybe what comes to mind is that this is all about being known—and being fully known.

My grandfather was the youngest in a family of ten – four boys and six girls. And there was a span of over ten years between my grandfather and his second oldest brother, my Uncle Ken.

When I was growing up, I got to know my grandfather's sisters very well, but not his brothers. When we would come back to Hawaii on home visits from Guam, I often saw my aunts, but never my uncles. I didn't even meet Uncle Ken until I started college at UH. And I remember my grandfather's bemoaning this fact one day when he said, "Sometimes I go to Hawaii several times a year, but I can go three or four years without seeing any of my brothers." My grandfather did not know his own male siblings.

Uncle Ken and his wife, Aunty Blanche, a long-time teacher at Epiphany School in Kaimuki, didn't have children.

And in the late 1980s when uncle Ken was suffering from Parkinson's disease, I moved into their house in Kapahulu for the summer when I was a student at UH and I help to take care of him. And taking care of him meant doing things like bathing him and helping him go to the bathroom and then cleaning up after the fact. I did this because I was living here as a student and because my grandparents raised me with a strong sense of filial duty – and part of that filial duty was my grandfather dispatching me to Kapahulu to help his brother.

And over the course of that summer after bathing my uncle, helping him go to the bathroom, spoon feeding him breakfast, lunch, and dinner, I got to see and know the totality of who he was in a way that my grandfather never had the opportunity to do.

But in order to get there, Uncle Ken had to be vulnerable and let me take care of him.

And that's what Jesus is asking his disciples to do this evening – to let him see the totality of who they are; not just a good, but also the not so good, including the dirt on the bottom of their feet.

It's about being fully known.

Who in your life do you trust enough to let them fully know you? Your mother and father? Your husband or wife? Your daughters and sons? Who in your life do you love enough to let them fully know you?

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For me, the answer to these questions is none of the above. I wasn’t raised by my mother and father. I don’t have a husband or a wife. I don’t have a daughter or a son. But there is someone in my life that I can endeavor to ask to fully know me, and that person is Jesus, Jesus the Christ.

And I hope it’s the same for you. That in addition to all the other people in your lives who you might allow to fully know you that Jesus be added to the list – to know the totality of you – the good and the bad.

It happens at our baptisms when we immerse ourselves in the waters and die with him in the tomb and resurrect with him into eternal life as our shortcomings become known to him so that he can wash them away in our baptismal waters.

It happens at our Eucharist as we allow him in to course through our veins and his presence makes it way down to our corpuscles and blood cells.

It happens in our prayers where we open up to Jesus not only with our desperation, also with our gratitude for all that God gives us through Christ – all the blessings and graces in our lives.

And it happens this week, Holy Week, where we enter as fully into the story as we possibly can and strive to fully know the Christ to dwells in our hearts so that he can fully know us.

And for tonight, it starts with our feet—our feet that have the dirt and where the Christ we long to fully know us sees us not only with dirt on our feet but also with our feet clean, symbolizing the possibility of our redemption because of what he’s going to do on that cross for us tomorrow at noon.

But tomorrow will take care of itself and tonight all we have to do is be open, vulnerable, and fully known.

And it starts with the washing of the feet.

*Amen.*