

The armed forces of the United States have worked at recruitment for the last few decades. The marketing departments have their slogans: Be all you can be. Find your future. They also offer incentives like education, employment, health care and retirement. To look at the ads for military service, it seems like a glorious way to live. And it is. But of course there's more to the armed forces than the uniform, the titles, the slogans and the incentives. There is danger. People go into battle. People may die. But people offer their lives this way because they believe in human dignity, freedom and peace. As events continue to unfold in Afghanistan and around the world, we realize all the more that someone who serves our country takes great personal risk.

When the Catholic Church serves up the eucharist, we use our own slogans and incentives. The body of Christ, we say. Share communion and experience unity with God on the deepest level. Experience unity with your family and with the whole Catholic world.

But there is more to the eucharist than the incentives. There are expectations. On the night before he died, at the Last Supper when Jesus shared his body and blood under the form of bread and wine, he did something else for his disciples. He washed their feet.

Footwashing signified hospitality. In hot dusty places where people wore sandals, feet got dirty. Your guests would feel welcome if your servant washed their feet.

Jesus was no servant to the disciples. He had no master; he had no equal. He was the Son of God. Peter rightly objected that Jesus should not wash the feet of those who came to learn from him. But he did. And he did it at the Last Supper. He gave the eucharist with one hand but he gave service with the other. In regard to the eucharist Jesus said, "Do this in memory of me." In regard to service he said, "As I have done for you, you should also do."

Holy Thursday is a beautiful night. I wish I could tell you it was all about incentives. That communion is simply the gift of Jesus' own body and blood for us. That communion is a free

lunch. But it's not. It comes with a price. It comes with the expectation of service.

We have good examples of service in parents who care for their children and those in our armed forces who protect our nation. Many people give humble service, even at the risk of their lives.

Jesus left this message with his closest friends on the night before he died. We remember this message every Holy Week, but we should remember it every blessed week. If you serve, you eat. And if you eat, you must serve.