

All happy families resemble one another; every unhappy family is unhappy after its own fashion.

Famous words from Tolstoy's introduction to his grand novel *Anna Karenina* said, no doubt, with his own search for 'happiness' in mind – a search which led him from one extreme to another throughout his life, rebelling at his own aristocratic privileges at one moment and indulging in them the next. Indeed, one might be tempted to say that his keenness to live the life of a serf at times, or of a hermit at the end of his life, was yet one more privilege he could indulge in because of his privileged life.

There is something more going on here in Jesus' kneeling to wash the feet of his 'servants', those who would expect to serve *him* rather than their master and Lord serving *them*. It is a complete challenge to every take we have on humanity, for Jesus kneels at the feet of Judas as much as at the feet of Peter because Peter and Judas have much more in common as human beings made in the image and likeness of God than they, and we, might later think; much more in common with Jesus, indeed, than *they* might think. And that brings us to our Eucharist: this sharing, not only in our common meal, but a common participation in Christ's death and resurrection in a body common to us all; a body in which happiness and unhappiness are not separated, as in Tolstoy's idealisation, but inextricably mingled in a sacrifice of praise and real suffering: flesh and blood under the appearance of bread and wine.

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