

School Vision – Theological Underpinning

Our vision is theologically underpinned by John 13:34. This verse is taken from a passage where Jesus washes his disciples (John 13:1-20), predicts Judas' betrayal (John 13:18-30) and predicts Peter's denial (John 13:31-38).

The day before Passover (Passover was one of the annual feasts that all Jewish men were required to celebrate in Jerusalem) Jesus was with his disciples and verse one states how he loved them. During this passage, Jesus surprises his disciples: 'he rose from the table, took of his outer garment and tied a towel around his waist' to wash the disciples' feet. In the ancient world, people walked on dirt roads covered in mud, animal waste, and assorted trash. Washing of the feet was dirty and usually something a person did themselves. When done for another person, it was *always* done by someone of a lower status. When Jesus washes the feet of the disciples, Peter is especially scandalized and it is even more poignant as Judas, the disciple who would go on to betray Jesus, was present and would have had his feet washed by Jesus. By washing the feet of his disciples, he is showing them not only how much he loves them, but how we should show love to one another – through being servant hearted and by our actions.

Jesus then goes on to predict Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial. During the passage, where Jesus tells Peter he will disown him three times, he gives a command 'Love one another, as I have loved you'. This does not only relate to how he shows his love while washing the disciple's feet, but through the stories of his life, healings and parables, and ultimately giving his life for his friends and mankind. It is important to note that while Jesus says this to his friends, his life was about living and serving all, not just those close to him. This verse is stating our standard of love is how Jesus loves us.

In John 13:34, Jesus uses the verb form of the Greek word agape (ἀγάπη) to describe love. Agape is often defined as unconditional, sacrificial love, and is often considered the highest form of Christian love. Jesus is calling on his disciples to practice agape love, which involves sacrificing and caring for others, even when it is inconvenient. It is the kind of love that is willing to do anything for another person, even sacrificing oneself, without expecting anything in return.

St Andrew's is about this type of love, one that serves, one that inspires, one that shows compassion, one that encourages all to be the very best.

We show this type of love through our twelve values – compassion, courage, endurance, forgiveness, friendship, hope, justice, respect, service, thankfulness, trust, truthfulness.