

Prayer Exercise for Session 4

Jesus washes Peter's feet. John 13.1-17



This exercise is best done in small groups. The listening groups are the natural place with the Group Enabler leading the reflection using the points below. Obviously it is necessary to have a copy of the painting for each group.⁶

This painting speaks powerfully of Jesus' loving service as he washes the feet of Peter. This painting has much for the viewer to ponder, all we offer is twenty minutes, with some simple prompts for attention and reflection. As in all these exercises, the aim is to let God speak through it, rather than telling people what God is saying. Time needs to be given between the prompts for this reflection.

- Spend time with picture, let yourself be in the place of Peter as Jesus comes to wash his feet.
- Look at the face of Jesus reflected in the water – sense how he is looking to show loving care of your feet...
- Look at the hands of Peter (it seems as if one is pushing Jesus away 'you will never wash my feet' and the other pulling him to him 'wash all of me'). Can you recognise your own inner draw and resistance to Jesus' love?
- Receive the washing of your feet. The love, and care of Jesus for you ...
- Stay with this until you feel you want to move on.

Give all but the last few minutes as space to be with the picture.

Near the end of the time encourage the group to make some notes of their experience.

Then offer the Window on God exercise to take away for further reflection on how they have experienced God in their lives.

The artist Sieger Köder was born on 3rd January 1925 in Wasseralfingen, Germany, where he completed his studies. During the Second World War he was sent to France as a front line soldier where he was made a prisoner of war. Once back from captivity, Sieger Köder attended the Academy School of Art in Stuttgart until 1951; then he studied English philology at the University of Tübingen as part of his qualification as a teacher.

After 12 years of teaching art and working as an artist, Köder undertook theological studies for the priesthood and in 1971 he was ordained a Catholic priest. From 1975 to 1995, Fr. Köder exercised his ministry as a parish priest in Hohenberg and Rosenberg and today he lives in retirement in Ellwangen, not far from Stuttgart.

The years of his ministry as a priest are among the most prolific with inspiring works of art. There is complete synergy between Fr Köder being a minister and an artist. He uses his paintings as Jesus used his parables. He 'reveals' the depth of the Christian message through

metaphors, shedding light and colour on life and human history. Köder's art is heavily charged with his personal experience of war during the Nazi period and the time of the Holocaust.