

Holy Thursday 2019

Tonight, beloved brothers and sisters, we inaugurate the final stage of our journey with Jesus through Lent into the Triduum; which is celebrated by the Church with the greatest formality, and almost as if these three days are one. Tonight our celebration immerses us into the deepest mystery: Our God, in Jesus Christ, made physically present in His One Sacrifice to the Father on our behalf, as Emmanuel, who remains with us **physically in** His Divine Love, and we in Him. Tonight, we see what it means to be loved unconditionally.

There are two needs that every human being has, without which we literally will die, because they are deeper than any other: The need to be loved, and the need to love. They are essential in our human nature, because we were created by God for this eternal purpose, and not even the greatest tragedy of all time, the sin of Adam and even our own sinfulness could not eradicate this reality in us!

Tonight, in the two actions of Jesus: the washing of the feet, including the one who would betray him- Judas; and, the ineffable gift of the Eucharist, Jesus, God in the Flesh, declares to us two things, two mysteries: First, in the washing of the feet which He has united to the action of the Eucharist itself, He declares: I love you unconditionally, I love you as you are, I love you in all of your sinfulness, in all of your betrayals, in all of your infidelities! And He assumes the work relegated to the lowest slave in the household, because it was so filthy, and washes their feet. The roads and by ways of the ancient world were covered with the dung of animals and the contents of chamber pots thrown out into the streets. This is the unimaginable, infinite humility of the love of God, the Creator in the flesh, who washes us from our filth, again, and again, and again!

Secondly, He creates a means by which He will remain with His beloved ones in His ultimate sacrifice of Divine Love for us: He gives us the Eucharist, and gives us the New Covenant by which He pledges His infinite Divine Love for us, and by which He remains with us in His full presence- the same presence that stands before the Father in Heaven, pleading for us always. It is His real presence, not just a spiritual presence, but the same Presence which the Cherubim and Seraphim and all of the Angels and Saints in heaven fall to the ground and

worship on their faces in the Book of Revelation, and declare: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, who was, who is, and who is to come!”

The God whom the ancient prophets longed to see, now makes Himself present, not in symbols as in the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem; but in His full reality as the Bread of Life and the Cup of Eternal Salvation- the Blood of the Lamb! The Lamb of God, whom all of Heaven adores in wonder and awe, makes Himself truly present in all of the Tabernacles of the Word in which the Mass is truly celebrated! The God of Infinite Divine Love poured out upon us remains with us to nourish us and our deepest longings.

But, He also remains with us in the Sacrament of the Priesthood, by which He extends the physical presence of His Divine love into the world. When Jesus declared: “Do this in remembrance of me,” He chose sinful and inadequate men to continue His Divine Presence with us throughout the ages until He come in His Glory, so that it is very clear, that these are the Actions of the God of love, and not merely human rituals. Remember, Judas was also made a priest! However, He also makes it very clear, that all those whom He has chosen, are also chosen and commanded to live the same love He has lavished upon them!

Tonight, Jesus is inviting us to renew our awareness of His Divine Presence, and to renew our pledge to recognize His Divine Presence which continues amongst until the end of time! We do this, first, by receiving His Holy presence with the same awe which is expressed in the Holy Scripture in the Angels and Saints throwing down their crowns, falling on their faces and declaring: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts....” We do this by our behavior in His Sacred Presence, recognizing God who is with us, in our demeanor and behavior in the Church. We do this by our worthy and holy reception of His Body and His Blood. We do this by attending Mass on every Sabbath and Holy Day. We do this by coming to Adoration during the week, to keep Him company and give Him our hearts in prayer. Tonight, when you come to receive Holy Communion, give Him the gift of yourself: “Tonight Lord and for the rest of my life, I give you all, I abandon all, I surrender all to you, who has given all, abandoned all, and surrendered all for me!”