

HOLY THURSDAY

HUMILITY, LOVE, AND SERVICE TO OTHERS

We begin the Triduum this evening, and it is a commemoration of the Paschal Mystery - the passion, death and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We are celebrating tonight the institution of two important sacraments in the Church, namely, the Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders. It is also to remind us of the Passover of the Old Testament.

In the OT, the Israelites were set free by means of the blood of sheep and goats (Heb. 10:4-6). This did not please God. In order to save the whole human race Jesus accepted to shed His blood. As the Israelites ate manna in the desert, Jesus gave us His body and blood as our spiritual food for our journey on this earth. St. Paul tells us that indeed the bread and wine change to be the Body and Blood of Christ, and as often as we eat and drink we proclaim Christ's death. He goes on to say that some of us are weak and sick and even dead because we don't eat it in a state of grace, because we don't accept or recognise the Eucharist as Jesus, whole and entire spirit, body and soul.

Tonight too, Jesus teaches us how to love and humble ourselves. He loved those who were His own to the end. Even though He knew the disciples were going to desert Him, He fed them and washed their feet. The Master became a slave for them. He told them to wash each other's feet as He, the master, had done. Everybody wants to be served and not to serve. We always want our authority and power to be felt by everybody. But the Master says that is for pagans.

I am (personally) to reflect on my priestly life this night. I am to renew the promise I made to Him when He conferred on me the order of priesthood. The power given me by Christ through the laying on of hands and anointing with Holy Chrism has enabled me to make Christ real for His people. The ministry by which God forgives the sins of His people, and new life is restored through baptism.

You are also called upon to reflect on the importance of the two sacraments; to pray for priests and for an increase of vocations; and to encourage your children and grandchildren to be priests and religious; and to examine the way and manner you approach the Eucharist. Do

you feel the presence of Jesus when you receive Communion? Do you receive communion with reverence? When you enter the church, does anything strike you that you are in the presence of the Lord, and thus show reverence, or do you behave any way you like? How many times a week or month do you adore the Lord, knowing that He is your Lord and Master; in Him you live and move and have your being?

How do I show humility in my day-to-day activities? Am I ready to forgive and let go when offended? Do I admit my fault when I wrong people? Am I able to say I am sorry when I hurt or offend someone? Love and humility go beyond insisting on my rights. They set me free.

Jesus was obedient, faithful, humble, and loving to the end. How can I be like Him to the end? Look beyond the bread you eat; see your Saviour and your Lord. He has shown you and me how to be true christians. Let us follow Him.

Those of you who do not receive communion, ask Him to help you remove the obstacles and come quickly to receive Him. He is waiting for you. He wants to live in you and give you new life.