

One show that I enjoy watching is *Fear the Walking Dead*. For those who might not know, it is a spin off from the original, *The Walking Dead*, where the general plot line of the show is the survival of a family in a post-apocalyptic world with zombies. With last year's season just released on Amazon Prime for streaming, I used my spare time on my day off to get caught up. The first episode of the season is entitled, "What's your story?" A new character is introduced to the plot who collects the survival stories of those that she meets. I couldn't help but think as I was watching this episode and the entire season, if someone, not in a post-apocalyptic world, was to ask us, as Catholic Christians, would we be able to tell her what our story is? Tonight, and these holy days, gives us the climax of our story...a story that reveals the relentless love of God for his people to the very end...to the sacrifice of his only begotten Son on the cross and leaving us a memorial of the sacrifice in the Eucharist. As the Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen writes about the Eucharist: "The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white Host."

On this night, the greatest love story reaches a critical point in the narrative; but, there is a prologue, a back story, which gives us context. At a traditional passover supper, the youngest at table would ask, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" The head of the household, the father, would then tell the story of what the Lord has done. He would recall what we heard in the first reading...how he liberated the Israelite's from slavery in Egypt by his mighty hand and formed a covenant with them in the blood of a spotless, unblemished lamb. The Lord commanded the Jewish people to keep this event alive in the memory of the people by celebrating it year after year, handing it on from generation to generation...to tell the story of the great deeds that the Lord has done for them.

The greatest love story tells the narrative of God, out love for his own who were in the world, would send a spotless, unblemished lamb that would be able to offer the sacrifice, once for all, to set us free from the bonds of sin and death rather than having the passover offered year after year. This spotless, unblemished lamb would be God's only begotten Son...who St John the Baptist rightly points out is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Through His sacrifice on the cross, the only begotten Son would become Our Saviour and mediator, establishing the new and everlasting covenant between God and man made in His Body and Blood. On this night with His apostles, in anticipation of His sacrifice on the cross, our Lord, the Lamb of God gives us the gift of the Eucharist as a memorial of that sacrifice. As often as we eat this bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Every time that we celebrate the Eucharist...every time we come to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we become active participants in the story...in the work of our redemption won for us by Our Saviour.

For this story to be told, and for us to be active participants in it for all generations, on this night Our Lord gave us the the gift of the ministerial priesthood so that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass could be offered throughout the ages. On this night, Our Lord, the great High priest gave his apostles and their successors, the bishops and

priests, a share in His priesthood. He gave them the power to re-present the sacrifice of Calvary. He commands them, "DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME."

With the Eucharist being at the heart of the ministerial priesthood, so intimately linked...the greatest love story for us continues on for all of us baptized into the royal priesthood as Our Lord rises from the table and gives us an example to follow. Every good story has a message...something to take away and live out. On this night, He shows us the boundless, infinite divine love by washing the dirty feet of His apostles. With the gift of the Eucharist, being offered through the hands of a priest, all of us are also given the task...the mandate...the command to love as Christ has loved us...to suffer in patience with those in need.

On this night, after we solemnly process our Blessed Lord to the Altar of Repose in the Hall, spend some time with Him, meditating on His love story for you...how he emptied Himself for you...how he gave us His body and blood for our food to nourish us on our pilgrimage on earth in the Eucharist...how he has renewed us in his love to be compassionate to others...meditate on how He loves us to the end.