

April 01, 2021

Holy Thursday/Mass of the Lord's Supper

Ex 12:1-8, 11-14

Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18

1 Cor 11:23-26

Jn 13:1-15

HIS LOVE MADE VISIBLE IN THE EUCHARIST!

More than a decade ago, a lady walked into my office. She wanted to tell me a very important decision she made. She told me that she is coming back to Church after being away for more twenty (20) years. She was humble enough to admit that she went 'church-hopping.' I listened to her. I was so curious about her story that I asked her, **"What made you decide to come back to the Catholic Church?"** She smiled and then responded, **"I missed the Holy Eucharist."** Before she started receiving Holy Communion, she asked me to hear her Confession. I complied. From then on, she attended the Mass everyday together with her husband who was not a Catholic at that time. Her love for the Holy Eucharist inspired her husband later to convert to Catholicism.

I know some people who were grieving because of losing a loved one. Instead of running away from Jesus, they came closer to him present in the Holy Eucharist. It is in the Holy Eucharist that they found refuge. It is in the Holy Eucharist that they were able to process the pain of death. It is in the Holy Eucharist that they were able to find healing. It is in the Holy Eucharist that they were able to continue their faith-life journey with hope.

A dear friend of mine was sick with cancer. He was aware of how aggressive his cancer was. Instead of pouting in self-pity, he just continued what he was doing prior to his diagnosis. He carried on attending the Holy Eucharist every day. He only stopped coming to the Holy Eucharist when he was already physical weak and could not stand up anymore. Nonetheless, the Holy Eucharist was brought to him. He eventually died – he died with hope in the resurrection with Jesus. He died in peace. His love for the Holy Eucharist helped him in his encounter with death.

Why am I telling you all these stories? I am sharing these stories with you simply because the Holy Eucharist helps us, the believers. The Holy Eucharist gives strength to the weak; healing to the wounded; peace to the weary; hope to the despairing; joy to the sorrowful; and guidance to the wandering. Indeed, the Holy Eucharist, wherein the Lord Jesus is truly present, offers us graces we need in our journey. Thus, the Church reiterates to us that the Holy Eucharist is **'the**

source and summit of the Christian life.' (CCC#1324) The Church also imparts on us that our presence in the celebration is **'for our good and the good of all his holy Church.'**

The Holy Eucharist is not something that the Church made up. It is in the bible. It was instituted by our Lord Jesus himself. The gospel proclaimed, in which our Lord Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, was in the context/framework of the **Last Supper – the first Holy Eucharist.**

What happened during the first Holy Eucharist? In the celebration with his disciples, our Lord Jesus communicated lots of lessons and allow me to give you two lessons:

- **First**, he revealed to his disciples that he was transforming the **Jewish Passover** into the **New Testament Passover**. If in the **old Passover**, the people were using their 'lamb' from their pastures as a sacrificial offering to God, in the **new Passover**, he will be the 'lamb' offering himself in love for the salvation of people. More than feeding our physical needs, the 'Lamb of God' feeds our soul/spirit so we can have the strength to proclaim the Good News to others.
- **Second**, our Lord Jesus conveyed to us our mission to be servants. We have to remember that the menial task of washing a smelly and dirty feet during the time of Jesus was reserved for servants. If Jesus, whom we call 'Master and Lord,' humbled himself in serving his disciples, **who are we not to follow His lead?** Like our Lord Jesus, our mission is to humbly wash each other's feet. We have to serve one another without expecting anything in return.

In our 2nd reading, St. Paul reminded us that the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is being continued without ceasing since the beginning of the Church. We are until now carrying out Jesus' command when he said: **"This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me...This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."** Every time we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, we bring to life the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus and challenges us to learn and embrace the meaning of self-giving sacrifice.

As we celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper, let us pray for each other that we may grow in our understanding of and love for the Holy Eucharist. May our growth help us in extending our hospitality to strangers; deepen our prayer life; passion to be formed and transformed; and the humility to serve the Church – the People of God.

God bless us all!