

- *“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”*
- Tonight we recall three things—the institution of the Eucharist...and in order to continue to bring the Eucharist to mankind, the institution of the priesthood; and, finally, Jesus’ commandment to His disciples of charity toward our fellow man.
-
- In these several days of the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday) and Easter, we celebrate the true Passover—from death by sin to eternal life through Jesus’ sacrifice.
- The Passover of the Israelites was simply from earthly slavery to earthly freedom—a foreshadowing of the true Passover, which is much greater.
- The Israelite Passover commemorated the great saving event, the deliverance of Israel from slavery, and its establishment as the people of God.
- And as the first Passover began with the communal consumption of a lamb, so does this greatest Passover begin with the partaking of the Body and Blood of the Lamb of God—th bread and wine which will be transformed (“transubstantiated) into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.
- For, at the Last Supper Jesus declares *“This IS my body...this IS my blood”*.
- And as the blood of the lamb adorned the doorposts of the Israelites turned away the angel of death, so does the Blood of the true Lamb, staining the lips of believers, turn away eternal death from those who receive it worthily and walk in the way of Christ.
-
- The Eucharist is many things. The word itself means “thanksgiving”.

- It is both memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ, and actual participation in that sacrifice—reaching through time to the cross... and reaching up to Heaven as a participation of the Heavenly liturgy and the eternal worship of God.
 - It is ONE sacrifice, not many. Each celebration of the Mass is not a “repeat”, but a participation in the ONE sacrifice of Christ Himself, which remains ever present.
 - The Eucharist is by far the greatest of sacraments—the sacrament from which all other sacraments receive their own grace and meaning...the source and summit of Christian life...and in it is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church—for it is Jesus Himself.
 - It is the pinnacle of God’s sanctification of the world in Christ, and of the worship men offer to Christ...and through Him to the Father and to the Holy Spirit.
 - It is a sign of Christian unity, and our reception of the Eucharist is a proclamation of faith—in Christ, and in His Church.
 - It is the perfect sacrifice...infinitely surpassing every and all sacrifices of the Old Covenant. It is the eternal sacrifice.
 -
 - When we receive communion, we are implicitly declaring that we are “in union with” (which is what “communion” means) Christ’s Church...and that is why the Eucharist is reserved for Catholics alone.
 - No prayers of ours—though good in themselves—can hope to remotely approach the grace that comes to us in the Mass...because this is the sacrifice and the Body of Christ Himself that we share in.
 - It is literally the perfect worship of God, for it is accomplished by God Himself.
-

- To perpetuate this living sacrifice, Jesus established the priesthood in His apostles.
- By imitating the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper, the priest consecrates the bread and wine, and by grace through the words of consecration those elements become the Eucharist.
- This is the priest's primary duty—the celebration of the Eucharist... to sacrifice to God the sacrifice of Christ.

- Now the apostles were the first bishops... ordained to serve, to govern, to teach, and to offer sacrifice.
- The ordained priest is simply the bishop's assistant—assigned to care for a given community. The priest is not a priest on his own, but is given authority by the bishop—the apostle—of Christ.
- That's why a priest cannot do whatever his whim leads him to want to do. The liturgy is not his, but rather belongs to the whole Church.
- And the church to which he is assigned is not his, but the bishop's... and each local parish is part of the greater whole—of the diocese... and of the world.

- And finally, by washing of the apostles' feet, Jesus shows us the nobility of service—to humble ourselves always for the good of the others...to never put ourselves first.
- Jesus, even as God, did not even shrink from this humblest of services for others—the washing of feet.
- So we take our lesson from Christ...who washes the feet even of Judas, who Jesus well knew was planning to betray Him...making good His teaching: *“Love thine enemies; do good to those who hate you.”*

- And if God Himself humbles himself in this way, how do we dare say that we are “too good” for others, or for anything...or that we cannot forgive this or that offense.
- Jesus tells us: *“If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”* (Mar 9:35 RSV). He declared: *“I come to serve, not to be served”*...therefore we, His disciples, ought to see humble service as the greatest of vocations...the greatest virtue.
-
- On the very brink of his Passion Jesus tells us: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you...”* (Joh 13:34 RSV)
- Through this gift of the Eucharist, He pours into us the grace to live that very way.

Reading 1

[Ex 12:1-8, 11-14](#)

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,
"This month shall stand at the head of your calendar;
you shall reckon it the first month of the year.
Tell the whole community of Israel:
On the tenth of this month every one of your families
must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household.
If a family is too small for a whole lamb,
it shall join the nearest household in procuring one
and shall share in the lamb
in proportion to the number of persons who partake of it.
The lamb must be a year-old male and without blemish.
You may take it from either the sheep or the goats.
You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month,
and then, with the whole assembly of Israel present,
it shall be slaughtered during the evening twilight.
They shall take some of its blood
and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel
of every house in which they partake of the lamb.
That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh
with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

"This is how you are to eat it:
with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand,
you shall eat like those who are in flight.
It is the Passover of the LORD.
For on this same night I will go through Egypt,
striking down every firstborn of the land, both man and beast,
and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt—I, the LORD!
But the blood will mark the houses where you are.
Seeing the blood, I will pass over you;
thus, when I strike the land of Egypt,
no destructive blow will come upon you.

"This day shall be a memorial feast for you,
which all your generations shall celebrate
with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a perpetual institution."

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18](#)

R. (cf. 1 Cor 10:16) **Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.**

How shall I make a return to the LORD
for all the good he has done for me?

The cup of salvation I will take up,
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

R. **Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.**

Precious in the eyes of the LORD
is the death of his faithful ones.

I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;
you have loosed my bonds.

R. **Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.**

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

My vows to the LORD I will pay
in the presence of all his people.

R. **Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.**

Reading II

[1 Cor 11:23-26](#)

Brothers and sisters:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,
that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over,
took bread, and, after he had given thanks,
broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Gospel

[Jn 13:1-15](#)

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come
to pass from this world to the Father.

He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end.

The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.

So, during supper,

fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power
and that he had come from God and was returning to God,

he rose from supper and took off his outer garments.
He took a towel and tied it around his waist.
Then he poured water into a basin
and began to wash the disciples feet
and dry them with the towel around his waist.
He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,
"Master, are you going to wash my feet?"
Jesus answered and said to him,
"What I am doing, you do not understand now,
but you will understand later."
Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet."
Jesus answered him,
"Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."
Simon Peter said to him,
"Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."
Jesus said to him,
"Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed,
for he is clean all over;
so you are clean, but not all."
For he knew who would betray him;
for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So when he had washed their feet
and put his garments back on and reclined at table again,
he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am.
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another's feet.
I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you, you should also do."