

The Beginning of The Paschal Triduum – Holy Thursday
– “Thursday of the Lord’s Supper at the Evening Mass”

13 April 2017 – 7:00 PM –

Our Lady of Victory Parish Community
HOMILY

1st Reading:

Exodus 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:

Psalm 116 – *Sung*

2nd Reading:

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

- "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 . . . "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, . . . "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:

JOHN 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. . . . 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. . . . "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." . . . "Unless I was you, you will have no inheritance with me." . . . So when he had washed their feet . . . reclined at table again, . . . 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."

I. A recovering alcoholic once shared with a friend "the dynamics of an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. [He stated:] "It's funny, the meetings are always the same, the exact same things get said over and over again. Everything is totally predictable; everyone, except those who are there for the first time, know already what will be said. And we're not there to show our best sides to each other. I don't go to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting to share my talents or to be a nice guy. No. I go because, if I don't, I know, and **know for sure**, that I will start drinking again and eventually destroy myself. It's that simple. **I go there to stay alive!**"

It is also at such meetings that, more often than not, the same, or similar, story is told . . . albeit . . . it may be a different face . . . a different name . . . but the story of just how the individual got there is often times pretty much the same, or similar . . . **but**, in **telling** the story . . . in **hearing** the story . . . in **remembering** the story . . . despair gives way to hope . . . and survival becomes a bit more possible . . . a bit more real . . .

"In a curious, but accurate way, **that** [is what this night and the days and nights to follow are all about.] [Among the many and varied reasons we gather this night is the desire and deep rooted passion for us], to **stay alive**.

And, **we** are not alone in that desire . . . for, while we have just heard the annual proclamation of testimonies of our ancestors in faith . . . of those who have shared the same desires . . . the same passions for survival . . . we write a new testimony this night . . . and will continue to do so in the days and nights ahead.

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

"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 . . . "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 convenient 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."**

"I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

III. The Exodus was the ultimate saving action by God for God's chosen people . . . the Israelites. It had to be marked . . . it had to be passed on to other generations, for if it was not . . . if at any time, the Israelites or humanity failed to remember, they would become lost . . . their very survival would be in jeopardy

And, in ancient Corinth, Saint Paul boldly spoke to those gathered . . . **reminding them** of exactly what it was that he had lovingly, carefully, **dutifully** handed on to them . . . not something he had created, but something **he** "received from the Lord" . . . This was not just some sort of arbitrary ritual meal . . . no . . . **this** meal was different . . . **this** meal was the **new, perpetual memorial** . . . one that was absolutely necessary to sustain life . . . absolutely necessary if those who believed were to "**stay alive**".

Recall what the recovering alcoholic shared about the "dynamics of an Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting" . . . He participates in it to "**stay alive**".

This "new, perpetual memorial" . . . this **Eucharist** "provides us . . . [you and me] with a life-sustaining ritual, a regular meeting around the word and person of Christ." Our ever so necessary meeting that we participate in so that **we** might "**stay alive**".

As one of the daily reflections from the Henri Nouwen Society noted about the power and necessity of a meal: "We all need to eat and drink to **stay alive**. But having a meal is more than eating and drinking. It is celebrating the gifts of life we share. A meal together is one of the most intimate and sacred human events. Around the table we become vulnerable, filling one another's plates and cups and encouraging one another to eat and drink. Much more happens at a meal than satisfying hunger and quenching thirst."

It is "Around [**this**] table [that] we become family, friends, community, [and more]. Around this table . . . we become "His body" . . . **His body** . . . His body that stooped low . . . His body that acted not as one to be served, but to model for others and us how we must serve . . . **His body** that understood sacrifice not as something lost but as everything to be gained.

It is around this table and in this particular gathering . . . **yes** . . . but each and every time we gather . . . that we **not** just any gathering . . . **not** just any meal . . . but **the** meal where and when we encounter Him anew . . . **the** meal that cannot and must never be measured by a clock, but that runs beyond all time . . . **the** meal from which we go forth, **filled** with the very life that has saved us.

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This night, we **begin** our meeting . . . where the seemingly ordinary becomes extraordinary and the routine rings familiar, and for all, we give **and**, we receive that which we need to "**stay alive**".