

## Homily for Holy Thursday

April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

### *A Room Made Ready*

In this Mass we celebrate the Institution of the Eucharist. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says of the Eucharist in paragraph 1323:

*At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed,*

Let us think about this in relation to the Scriptures and Holy week. The Palm Sunday triumphal entry where the enthusiastic crowds' hosanna will turn to their verdict "crucify him" on Good Friday. The friendship of the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus where Jesus went on the Monday provided refuge after he had overturned the table of the money changers earlier that day. The seeking out of the large upper room where he could celebrate the Passover with his closest friends. At that first Mass, while present in his physical body he gave for the first time his Eucharistic Body. This meal of such intimacy was also filled with painful anguish. Judas had already set the price of the infamous sale; Peter was about to deny his master; all, except for John, would abandon him.

The Catechism next says about the Eucharist.

*our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood.*

Now let us think about this. The Eucharist is the answer of Jesus to the treachery of men, as the greatest gift of His infinite love in return for our blackest ingratitude. The merciful God would pursue His rebellious children, not with threat, but with the most delicate devices of His immense charity.

Returning to the Catechism:

*This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again,*

Jesus had already done so much for sinful man, but now when human malice is about to sound the lowest depths of the abyss, Jesus exhausts the resources of His love, and offer himself to man, not only as the Redeemer who will die for him on the Cross, but also as the food which will nourish him. He will feed us with his own Flesh and Blood. Even though death will claim him in a few hours, the Eucharist will perpetuate His real, living presence until the end of time.

St Catherine of Sienna said of this perpetual sacrifice:

*O You who are mad about your creature, true God, and true Man. You have left yourself wholly to us, as food, so that we will not fall into weariness during our pilgrimage in this life, but will be fortified by You, celestial Nourishment.*

What St. Catherine states so poetically the Catechism says this way:

*and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection:*

The Eucharist has been entrusted to us that so that while the Triduum in history happened once, we can return to it, not only annually but every time we share in the Eucharistic sacrifice. At the time when human sinfulness, calculation and cruelty was about to enact its most violent crime, deicide – that is the death of God; God was about to enact his most benevolent gift – our deification. That is the invitation to share in the divine life of God.

The more we realize the demonstration and extension of love Jesus offers us in the Mass then with the Catechism we discover that:

*The Eucharist is a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.*

I want to invite you this evening in a very special way to gather with Jesus living in our midst through the person of His ministers, Fr Arjay, and me, to renew once again the great miracle which changes bread and wine into His Body and Blood. He will say to you as he did to those gathered at the first Mass: Take and eat.... Take and drink.

Remember it was Jesus himself who made the arrangements for the Last Supper, choosing “a large room” and directing his disciples to prepare it suitably. We pray that our hearts, dilated and made spacious by love, will also be a large cenacle, where Jesus may come and worthily celebrate His Paschal Mystery,

Let us pray with St. Augustine:

O Lord, Lord, how small and narrow is the house of my soul for You to enter! Enlarge it Yourself. It is in ruins, repair it. I know and admit that there are things in it that are offensive in Your sight. But who will cleanse it? Or to whom but you shall I cry, purify me, Lord, from my hidden sins and enlarge my heart so it may be a room made ready to receive your Eucharist.