

Homily – Mass of Last Supper

April 18, 2019

This evening we join Jesus and his disciples in the Upper Room, at the Last Supper on the night before he died. It is both a solemn and a sad scene. Judas has already betrayed Jesus but is still at table with him! Impetuous Peter at first refuses to allow Jesus to wash his feet and then asks for a total bath! He will vow to stand with Jesus no matter what – and within hours will deny three times that he even knew him. This is the culmination of Jesus' mission: the beginning of his Passover from life to death to risen life. However, his closest friends do not understand what is happening and will abandon him in his hour of greatest need.

Jesus knows all of this, but is faithful to the end, loving them totally, unconditionally. He gives them – and us -- his own Body to eat and his Precious Blood to drink. He asks them – and us – to celebrate the Eucharist in memory of him, recalling the Last Supper and his death on the Cross each time.

Jesus also does something quite unexpected. He takes upon himself the duties of a servant, a slave, and washes his disciples' feet. Jesus had told his disciples that leadership in the community of

faith means serving others. As Pope Francis has said, “Jesus overturns the historical and cultural customs of that epoch, and those of today too: in order to be a good leader, one who leads, wherever he may be, must serve.” That is not the model that many leaders follow today! Those who truly listen to the gospel are often the poor, the suffering, those discarded or neglected by society.

In washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus says that he has given us “a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you also should do.” We are incredibly privileged to be invited to the Last Supper and to partake of the Lord’s own Body and Blood. But then we must carry the Lord with us into our daily lives. We need to proclaim the good news of God’s enduring love for everyone with those who need to hear the good news – not only by our words but also our actions. We need to reach out as Jesus did – to the poor and the needy, the vulnerable and the imprisoned, the addicted and the abused. No one is to be excluded from God’s loving embrace!

Our Lady is with Jesus and the disciples in the Upper Room. Dear Lady, we love you. Help us to bring forth your Son into the world that desperately needs him and his gospel message.