

Homily – Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper Holy Thursday – April 14, 2022

It is important to remember and commemorate important events in our history and our lives. For the people of Israel, Passover – or Pesach – was the most important holiday of their faith. It reminded them of their liberation from Egypt. For us Catholics, the Easter Triduum is the commemoration of the redemptive work of Christ, summarized in the words of Eucharistic consecration. Jesus is the Lamb of God who frees the world from sin, constituting a new Holy People of God.

Easter is the passage of the Lord. When the Lord passes by, history radically changes its course. After an encounter with God, nothing is the same as before. It is always celebrated in spring to remind us that the God – who gave us life – wants to give us new life. It is a new beginning. The life of Jesus unites earth with heaven. Furthermore, he makes heaven present on earth. God is in our midst. By pronouncing his words anew at each Mass through the lips of the priest, he actualizes his Paschal Mystery through the Church, making it present. The Lord wants our life to be an expression of his own life. Before his life was taken from him in the eyes of his disciples, he wanted to show that no one takes his life away from him. He himself is Life, which is given so that the world may have new life.

Saint Paul wants to make the true meaning of the Eucharistic tradition clear to the Corinthians. Some had turned the Lord’s Supper into their own supper, forgetting above all about charity. We should be ashamed of many faults of our own and of the Church. We should also feel blessed for what we have received and what we have achieved by God’s grace. Throughout twenty centuries, the Church has accumulated and contributed an incomparable wealth to humanity, through thought and the arts, through the lives of its saints and through many works of incalculable greatness.

But within all that treasure and above all things, everything makes sense in love and only through love. Saint Paul later reminds the Corinthians that all

gifts and good works, without love, would be of no use. Therefore, in commemorating the Last Supper, the liturgy includes the sign of the washing of the feet. The Lord set an example for his disciples to do the same. No one in history has loved more than Jesus, who nourishes us with his body, his blood, his soul and his divinity, to transform us into effective signs of his own love. Already strengthened with that Food, the disciples are finally commanded by Jesus to love one another as he has loved them. It is a reminder that – above all else – the world must recognize that we are disciples of Christ by how we love. There is no greater treasure and tradition in the Church than the love that makes Jesus present.

The Lord does not deliver us from our mortal nature, from our disordered inclinations or from many problems. Nor does He promise us an easy life. The Father does not deliver Jesus from his Passion and Cross. The Eucharistic Meal demands that we respond. Before the new life blossoms, worldly intentions must die in us. The Word of God made flesh challenges us, but He also strengthens us. He calls us to conversion and helps us be reconciled. He teaches us how to imitate his life, which is also the truth and the way.

The Body and Blood of Christ is food that satisfies eternally and medicine that heals forever. It is his own life in us. It is infinite joy that nothing and no one can take away from us. Having experienced communion at the Lord's Table, we are obliged that our passage through the lives of others be for them a sign of Christ's Passover. This command demands from us a love that tends to everyone and wholeheartedly. As Pope Francis says, the "love of Jesus is for everyone; everyone has the same privilege: that of being loved and forgiven." Jesus assures us that in this way his Paschal Mystery fills us with his Holy Spirit, who renews us interiorly and renews the face of the earth like a new spring.

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, help us live our faith intensely, renew our hope and teach us to love as Jesus has loved us.