

Homily – Holy Thursday

March 29, 2018

“He loved his own...and he loved them to the end.” In celebrating the Eucharist we join Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper and we also stand at the foot of the Cross – in awe of God’s enduring, unconditional love for us. Jesus tells his disciples – and us – “This is my body that is for you.” Jesus was sent by the Father into the world to show us God’s love for all creation. Why does God love us – despite our weakness, our sin, our shortcomings, our defects? This is a great mystery, but we firmly believe that it is true. God’s word is true. It is powerful. It is merciful and compassionate. It is comforting and consoling – but also challenging!

Jesus is the Lord. He is the Son of God. But at the Last Supper he takes on the role of a slave, a servant. He washes the feet of his disciples as an example to us. Hours later he shows his great love for his friends by giving his very life for them – for us. “He loved them until the end.”

Our worship and our work on behalf of social justice are both essential dimensions of the Church’s mission and ministry. In our celebration of the Eucharist we listen to God’s word and receive the

Body and Blood of the Lord to sustain us on our journey. Then we are sent out to work for justice and peace as stewards of the environment. We bring the suffering we encounter through our social justice endeavors back to the Eucharist. We asking God's help, the wisdom and courage of the Holy Spirit to continue Jesus' mission of love and compassion -- to the brokenhearted, the captive, the blind, the neglected, the stranger, the immigrant, those who mourn. That is how we fulfill Jesus' mandate at the Last Supper.

We live in a time of chaos, widespread violence and hatred, racism, serious divisions and deepening polarization. As Christians – as missionary disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are challenged to follow him even to the Cross on Calvary. We do so in order to carry out our shared responsibility for building up the kingdom of God in our world. The Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen us to be faithful to our calling. *Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!*

Mary is in the upper room with Jesus' disciples. Our Lady has promised to be with us always. She accompanies us on our journey. Dear Lady, we love you. Lead us into communion with all your children. Help us to proclaim the gospel by our lives in the world that desperately needs to hear the good news of God's love!