

Homily – Holy Thursday

April 13, 2017

In the Gospels Jesus often sits down at dinner with his disciples and friends, with Pharisees and Scribes, with tax collectors and public sinners. He sits in table fellowship with them, enjoying food and drink and expecting to engage in good conversation.

When he sits down with Pharisees and Scribes, the occasions are marred by controversy and tests. The result is alienation, not table fellowship. However, when he eats with tax collectors and public sinners, the encounter and dialogue lead to conversion and salvation. This evening, we gather with Jesus and his disciples in the Upper Room for the Last Supper – with a doubter, a denier, a betrayer, a loving disciple. What will our experience be? What do we want it to be?

The food we eat is the very Body of Christ offered on the cross for our salvation. Our drink includes his Precious Blood shed for our redemption. The Eucharistic Body and Blood of Jesus nourish us for our pilgrimage of faith and immerse us in the Paschal mystery – Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection. The Eucharist is both the sign and the source of our unity as a community of disciples.

At this Passover meal, Jesus acts out a simple but profound parable. As the Servant of God, he washes the feet of his disciples. He gives them – and us – an example of humble service in God’s kingdom. Jesus washes feet to teach us that we are to serve others, as he did. Most of all, the washing of the feet shows Jesus’ abiding love for his disciples – vividly shown on the Cross.

We are not worthy of this action. We are sinners. But God’s name is mercy. He is full of compassion. Jesus’ new commandment at the Last Supper is: Love one another as I have loved you -- holding nothing back, excluding no one from the love of God poured into our hearts, seeing that everyone has a place at God’s table and their basic needs are met.

It is not enough to simply **watch** others’ feet being washed this evening. We are to **recommit** ourselves to serving others, helping others, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Our Lady was with the disciples in the Upper Room until the time of Pentecost. Our Lady of Guadalupe is with us here and now, as she promised us through Saint Juan Diego. Let us allow her to embrace us with her maternal love.