

Holy Thursday Homily Reflection
April 9, 2020
Ex. 12:1-8, 11-14 / 1 Cor. 11:23-26 / Jn. 13:1-15
SJTW & SC- Dubuque
“Do this in remembrance of me”
Fr. Paul Attah-Nsiah

Remember – Reenact – Relive

In the desert of this Holy Thursday eve, we welcome everyone to this **“Remembering Reflection.”** We bring the best of our hearts’ remembering history into the Domestic Church of our homes where we will celebrate simply this year, celebrate that Jesus **is** with us and **for** us. We are promised his accompaniment always especially in the midst of our struggle and suffering. “Behold, I will be with you until the end of the world”. All that we endure, small or great, is drawn into Jesus’ suffering for the salvation of humankind.

We remember all the past **Holy Weeks of our life** to be the most sacred time to accompany Jesus. Holy Week centers our faith and highlights our believing around the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Many of us come to every service to be immersed in Jesus’ love for us. This year, with its semi lockdown of solitude, urges us to unite our own life and heart with Jesus, to bring our strengths and weaknesses, our light and darkness of spirit, and our highs and lows within these challenging days. All of it – ALL – is part of the whole, part of God’s plan in some way. Like Jesus, the struggles of our lives, especially during this coronavirus pandemic, cannot just be swept away. They are real. We bring ours into the heart of Jesus who abides with us. These realities teach us, humble us and transform us as we unite them with the merciful heart of Jesus’ saving cross.

We remember on this night the anointing of priests and consider our own Baptismal priesthood anointing us. We now let that grace lead our small family community in grateful prayer during these days of isolation and fear. Especially now, it is up to us to live these mysteries together in our home as we cherish them in our heart. We do this in prayerful thanksgiving. I urge us to join any of the reflections offered by our parish. Hearing the messages of scripture into our hearts will permeate our homes’ atmosphere. Love and longing for God will grow between us.

We remember our Paschal meal and the joy filled gathering of the faithful. In our solitude, we long for that gathered community and long for it in its absence. Jesus is the BEST of our friends, the friend who gives over his life for us. We share in this giving over of our life as we stay safe, protecting everyone from this virus. We will not receive the Eucharist this year. That is our greatest

sacrifice tonight, not receiving the Eucharist. The abundance of perfect love is known in the Eucharist, as we become one with the heart of Jesus.

We make a **spiritual communion** of desire in our heart's prayer. Prayer strengthens us spiritually to be one with Jesus and His Spirit. Tonight, our sacrifice is very clear. At our simple meals at home we remember Jesus' Eucharistic words: **"Do this in remembrance of me!"** Wherever we are, with whomever we are, let us shape for ourselves a family table that has a Eucharistic heart of love and service.

We remember Jesus' humble washing of feet. Nothing is more humble than our feet. They are at the bottom of everything that we identify as our self. Our feet connect us to the earth and carry us to our life's journey. Touching another's feet is an intimate gesture, something we entrust to those who love us most. In Jesus' culture, the lowest on the social hierarchy were left to wash feet. The disciples of Jesus were confused and ashamed, not personally but ashamed for their Lord and Master, taking off his outer-garment, kneeling before them, washing their feet. However, Jesus was clear: we always serve others, all others, by putting aside our pride, arrogance, prejudices and superiority complexes. Jesus led by example: leaders must serve.

For Jesus, love means sacrifice, love means, not what you're going to get, but it's measured in what you're going to give. He urges us today: be imitators of me, for **"I did not come to be served, but to serve"** and **"What I have done, you must do."** We may ask ourselves, what is Jesus calling me to do for my family, neighbor, community, in this period of COVID-19? We become a blessing to the others in our life as we protect them and keep them safe. Today who among us are the most marginalized, avoided, shunned? Jesus reached out to them always. In what way can we be sure that the least among us -- the weakest or most endangered -- have greater hope, safety and companionship? We make these sacrifices because love comes first. Love leads the way. These days are unprecedented. Each of us is important to the paschal mystery, to putting on Christ, carrying the grace of service with us and committing to whatever sacrifice is required because that is what love does. God bless all of us: our parish, our families, our community and our world. Happy Holy Thursday!!!