



Holy THURSDAY

EX 12:1-8, 11-14, PS 116:12-13, 15-16BC, 17-18., 1 COR 11:23-26, JN 13:34, JN 13:1-15

Towards the Glory of Easter: Holy Thursday; The Eucharist, Source and Summit

Today is the last supper of the Lord with his disciples. As a new Pastor here at Holy Redeemer, It is a great joy to celebrate my first Paschal Triduum with you. I am very happy indeed to speak about the Eucharist, the heart of the mystery of the Church. Of course, we cannot have the Eucharist without the presence of validly ordained priests. So we also celebrate today the institution of the ministerial priesthood. Let's focus on the Eucharist.

Dear friends, Vatican II calls the Eucharist, the Source and the Summit of our Christian life. It is everything. It is the beginning and the end. It is Christ among us! How can we become Christ in the midst of others?

Jesus is really and truly present in the sacrament of the Eucharist!

Across the century, the Catholic Church has always believed that Jesus is really and truly and substantially present among us. He is not here symbolically. No! The sixth chapter of John is our reference to the justification of the real presence. In John 6:53, Jesus is the living bread and the refreshing blood without which we have no life in us. This was certainly very difficult for the Jews of the 1st Century, since even the normal animal meat with blood was forbidden and considered as offensive to God. How much more to speak of eating humans and drinking human blood? He was very seriously objected to and opposed by many who decided to leave. Surprisingly, Jesus intensified his teaching instead of softening it.

“My flesh is real food and my blood is true blood” (John 6:55).

When people contradict our faith or our belief in the Church's sacraments and teaching, what is our attitude? Do we stand firm like Jesus,

our Lord? What we celebrate today is the source of our life; it is the life-giving to our Church. Late Pope Benedict XVI taught us that:

“Without the Eucharist, the church simply does not exist”.

The Eucharist is about who Jesus is

The Eucharist clearly indicates that Jesus is not just a great human figure who simply speaks symbolically, but God from God, True God from true God, true light from true light, begotten and not made, and consubstantial with the Father. Therefore, what he says is. Jesus speaks as God speaks. In the Book of Genesis 1:3, God said let there be light and there was light. Let the earth come forth and it comes forth. Jesus spoke on the dead body of Lazarus and he came back to life. (John 11:43). To the daughter of Jairus, Jesus said **“Thalitha Kum”** and the dead young girl arose from her sleep. Jesus, on this day speaks over the bread and wine: **“This is my body” “This is my blood”**. The word of God affects reality. In the Eucharist, Jesus Christ fulfills his promise: **“Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age”** (Mt 28:20). Jesus is indeed, the bread of life.

Importance of the Eucharist for us

The Eucharist eternalizes us. When we receive the body of Christ we become one with him. This equips us for eternal life. We are crucified; No wonder St. Paul says:

“Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?” (1Cor 10:16-17).

In his Encyclical Letter, *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*, St. John Paul II wrote;

“The Church draws her life from the Eucharist”

As the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27), we live because of that *body* and we are connected to one another. This invites us to live in unity and love for one another as a new commandment of Christ to us. (John 13:34). The Eucharist invites us to deepen this dimension of the Church as a family. In this manner, we wash each other's feet; we care for the needs of one another; we serve one another; we help one another. Since Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, we are to become truly present for one another. Mother Teresa is told that

“Jesus has made Himself the Bread of life to give us life. Night and day, He is there. If you really want to grow in love, come back to the Eucharist, come back to the Adoration.”

Happy Holy Thursday!

Happy feast to all our Priests!

Fr. Georges Roger BIDZOGO sac

"IF WE BUT PAUSED FOR A MOMENT TO CONSIDER ATTENTIVELY WHAT TAKES PLACE IN THIS SACRAMENT, I AM SURE THAT THE THOUGHT OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR US WOULD TRANSFORM THE COLDNESS OF OUR HEARTS INTO A FIRE OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE."

-ST. ANGELA OF FOLIGNO