

Homily. Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper. 29/3/2018.

We're celebrating the last meal of a condemned man. We're commemorating His execution at the hands of a powerful yet deeply insecure and threatened system, one very like ours, all carried out at the behest of people who, just like us, too often blindly follow our leaders for the sake of acceptance and an easier life.

Jesus knew full well that His days were numbered when he gathered with His closest friends for this one final special meal. He knew, too, that one of them was going to betray Him and that the rest would deny and desert Him in His hour of greatest need, running as far away from Him as their feet would carry them. Knowing all of this, fully aware that He could have simply fled into the desert never to be found, He chose to stay the course for the sake of His integrity and faith, and for the sake of our salvation.

Our champion in the great battle against evil and all that oppresses us chose to stick it out to the bitter end, pinning all of His hopes on God and on the power of God's love to win out over our hates and fears. In none of this was He thinking about Himself or what was good for Him, instead listening only to God the Father, placing His entire life at the service of our liberation. He wasn't seeking medals, citations or other gongs, only that we might remember Him and come to do for each other as He did for us.

As St. John tells us the story, His last supper is shot through with stress and pressure, with the onset of the hour of darkness, that hour of the final

and absolute confrontation between goodness, love and light on one hand, and evil, fear and dark slavery to self on the other. Jesus washed the very feet that He knew were going to run from Him, our feet. That's exactly what we'll copy in a few moments. He served those who, when the chips were down would, like us, choose to only serve themselves. He sacrificed Himself for them, that is for you and me, too, who have great difficulty sacrificing for anything and anyone who doesn't serve our own plans, ambitions and dreams. He did it nevertheless, leaving us not only an example to imitate and follow, but Himself to take into our selves as food and drink so that we might grow and be changed by what we consume until we become like Him.

When Jesus said during that last meal that we were to do this in memory of Him, He wasn't simply asking us to keep repeating as often as we could the action and ritual that's become our Eucharist. No, He was asking us for much more than a simplistic aping of His words and actions. He wanted us, by what we repeated and remembered, to know better and deeper what He was all about and why He chose the way He did. He wanted for us by doing so to choose for ourselves to do the same for others; to be sacrificing ourselves in love for the enslaved, the alienated, the ungrateful and those who live every day under the shadow of death.

This is what we're all about on this sacred holy night, and every time we come together around the table of the Lord as God's children, the Church. Let's never forget this truth, remembering Him always laying down His life loving us without hesitation, limit or counting the cost.