



## **Thursday, April 13, 2017 Holy**

### **A Blessed Sacrament Parish Homily by Deacon Terry Ellerman**

**Reading I** Isaiah 6:1-3, 6, 8-9 Psalm 89:21-22, 25, 27

**Reading II** Revelations 1:5-8

**Gospel** Luke 4:16-21 **Homily**

This evening we celebrate Holy Thursday. It is the beginning of the Triduum, the most sacred three day of the Liturgical year. We look at these days not as one day but we group them together because one of the basics of our faith is the Pascal Mystery and that is Christ's passion, his death and resurrection. And that is why we celebrate these three days. We celebrate his love for us. If you have ever thought about what love is, it is difficult for anyone to comprehend it to the fullest. I think we have all been loved, we all have loved, and as much love as a mother might have for a child — if you multiply that by a hundred trillion and more —that is the love that God has for all of us. We see in our Gospel the setting. Jesus is going to a supper to celebrate the Passover like he did every year since he was a child. Only this year it is going to be different.

Our First Reading gives us a glimpse about the meaning of the Passover. If you remember the story, we are told how God works through Moses to make Pharaoh "let them go." The last plague was that if you do not let my people go, the first-born will die. Pharaoh didn't listen and God said to Moses, "Tell your people that tonight we shall have a feast. Take an unblemished lamb or goat, slaughter it, eat it and put the blood on the lintel of your porch. And that way when the angel of death comes by your house, the first born will be spared. Passover is that great celebration, that great celebration of God's victory of his people when they are set free. But if look at the human race at the time of Christ, were we set free? The answer is no. And because of the sin of Adam and Eve we, too, are in slavery. We too had not inheritance. We too had no future. So Jesus death is simple. So he is thinking, "What do I need to do, because there is not much time in the next couple of days? I am going to suffer and die. And yes, be raised from the dead." But I am sure he was not thinking about the suffering he was going to go through. He was thinking, "What do I need to tell my disciples, and what do I need to give them? What do I need to do to make sure that when I am gone they are going to be OK?" So what does he do? He creates the institute of the Eucharist. So at the last supper he took bread, he took wine, blessed them and said, "This is my body. This is my blood."

So every Sunday or whenever we come to Mass we have the privilege and the opportunity to receive the real presence — not the symbol of, but the real thing. Even though he died and rose and is in heaven, every time we come to this liturgy we receive him and are nourished by his body and blood. We celebrate that institution tonight. We also celebrate the institution of the priesthood. We are all very thankful for Father Mike and Father Adam and for all the priests because without them there would be no Eucharist, there would be no presence. It is them saying to Christ, "Yes, I will follow you. Yes, I will be devoted to you 24-7 so that I can help your people to be nourished and fed and someday be with you. So we celebrate the Eucharist, and the institution of the priesthood by which the Eucharist continues to nourish us.

The Gospel Reading is one of my favorites where in the middle of supper Jesus gets up, puts an apron on and says, "I am going to wash your feet." To understand, to wash the feet of someone was nothing new, it was common. In Palestine if you were walking in your sandals or with bare feet it was dusty, or if it was raining your feet were muddy. So when you came into a house it was customary for your feet to be washed. But not by the master of the house. But rather by a slave or someone else. It was a very lowly job. And Jesus gets up and says, "I'm going to wash your feet." Humility. Again, his showing his love for us. And then he gets to Peter and Peter says, "You're not going to wash my feet." Jesus asks him, "Do you want to go to heaven?" "Yes," Peter answered. And being the smart aleck that he was Peter said, "Wash my hands and my head and arms as well." Jesus said, "I don't need to do that, only your feet will I wash." This is all about service. This is about Jesus putting into action how we should live. At the end of the Gospel he says, "If I, your servant and Master wash your feet, then you need to go out and wash the feet of others." We need to be of service to one another. No, we don't leave church here and say, "Hey, I want to wash your feet." Someone might take you to the hospital and think you have a problem. But "to wash feet" means that we have to be of service to each other. Are we? Are we people who are of service to each other? For most of us the answer is "yes." Could we do more? Probably. But to be of service means we are to be attentive to each other, not only within our parish and our community, but throughout the world. And when we see needs we should respond in appropriate ways. In 1989 Mother Teresa went to Phoenix, Arizona, where her order had opened up a new house for the poor. When he finished the interview he said to Mother Teresa, "How can I help you?" In his mind he was thinking that she would ask him to make a donation, or ask for some airtime to raise some money for the house for the poor. She said, "Find someone that is not loved, and love that person." "Find someone that is not loved, and love that person." The message today is that God so loved us that it is overwhelming. We can't comprehend that love. We can look at the Eucharist and everything he did in his healing and preaching and teaching and that tells us how we should live and love, and how he lived and loved us. But it is easier watching him than it is to do it. So the question we need to ask ourselves tonight is: What do we need to do more to wash feet? What do we need to do to be of more service to each other? When I look at moms and dads, they give to their children first. Hopefully when their kids become parents they will do the same. That is what love ultimately is. But that love can extend needs to each other. We talk about stewardship in the church. We have a stewardship form you can sign up to help in our parish in some way. What are you willing to do within your church to make the world a better place? Whether it be gift bearers, or ushers or readers there is a place where you can help. If you looked in the bulletin last week, there is a list of all the people who help with the funeral luncheons. We are called to continue Christ's work. Our message today is: We are to be the hands and feet of Christ. We do that by sharing the love he gives to us with one another.

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