

April 9, 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter into this most holy of all seasons, the Sacred Paschal Triduum, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, we are called to reflect on the saving work of our Lord Jesus. Jesus, by His Passion, Death and Resurrection, has opened the Gates of Heaven for you and me. I will be sending out a letter for each of these days, but only this one will have a text message reminder. Just go to our website to read the letters.

On Holy Thursday we remember our Lord Jesus celebrating the Last Supper with His disciples. The Gospels tell us that He took off His outer garments and began to wash the feet of His disciples, which was the job of the lowest slave of the house. Jesus told the disciples that they were to serve others as He had just served them. I know that as we are sheltering in place, it is hard for us to understand how we are called to serve one another. I believe that Christ is calling you and I to serve each other by sheltering in place. We can become servants by just staying home and not spreading the virus. In this time of shelter in place we are called to serve our families by spending time with them, praying with and for them, reaching out by phone to people who maybe we have lost touch with, and one of the greatest signs of love is being willing to “waste” time with one another.

On Holy Thursday we also remember the institution of the Eucharist. Jesus turned the Passover meal into the First Mass when He said “Take and eat for this is my body.” “Take and drink for this is my blood.” We know and believe that at each Mass Jesus continues to turn bread into His body and wine into His blood. During this time without public Masses, I was reflecting on our first communion and how we looked forward to it and our hearts were filled with joy. I was reflecting on bringing people back into the Church and how tears of joy fell from their faces as they were reunited with Jesus in the Eucharist. I believe this joy will be ours as we gather once again. Maybe we will not be as willing to take this great gift of Jesus’ Body and Blood so much for granted, but truly celebrate Jesus love for us and His union with us.

One of the tasks I needed to do during this time was to consume all of the hosts that were in the Tabernacle so they would not go stale. As I thought about this I knew I could not just stand there and consume them. After some prayer, I decided to consume them at Mass. One at a time, consuming about ten at each Mass. I prayed as I consumed each one, that the grace of the Eucharist be bestowed on those who hunger for the Eucharist, that in their spiritual communion they be filled with the presence of Jesus. In this way the church did not seem so empty, knowing that I was not alone, that I was surrounded by the saints of Heaven, the angels, all those who so desired to receive our Lord, and of course with our Lord Jesus. The church was no longer empty but was filled to capacity along with my heart. Jesus said, “I stand at the door and knock. Open the door and I will come in and dine with you.” I pray on this Holy Thursday, as we reflect on that first Eucharist, that we hear Jesus knocking at our door.

Once again I want to say thank you for all the prayers, cards, food, and support during this difficult time. I want to again thank those who continue to support our parishes with prayers and financial support. I would like to close with an old Irish blessing. May the Roads rise up to meet you, May the wind be always at your back, May the sun shine warm upon your face, and the rain fall soft on your fields, and until we meet again May God hold you in the palm of His hands.

Fr TIm