

Fr. Larry's Homily – Holy Thursday, March 20th, 2008

Good evening. So we begin another Triduum. The last days of Lent as we lead, we have to remember that everything we do is to lead to the Resurrection. And so that gives us hope in the midst of everything else we do, that it's leading to something that's life-giving. We don't just do this because we like to feel down. We do this because we knew that this is what Jesus had to do to save us. And so it's a time that's holy, but it's a time of great rejoicing also.

And so if you listen to the second reading today, it's the narrative of the institution of the Eucharist, where Paul was sitting there telling us what Jesus did. And the key words for us to focus on tonight is when Jesus looks and after He's taken the bread and the cup and He said, "This is My Body, this is My Blood", He says, "Do this in remembrance of Me." And so what He's saying of course is just very simple. We put it in flowery language but what it is is simple. Jesus says, "Remember Me." Simple, remember me.

And when we focus on this "remember Me" tonight, we're going to focus on three things. The first is the path of Christ, the history of this remembrance. The second is the encounter with Christ at this very moment in the Eucharist. And the third is the living in memory of Jesus. Okay?

So the first thing we've got to do is remember the past and remember everything that He did for us. And it isn't something that just started with Jesus. Remember we opened up our back altar purposely tonight, because on the back altar of course is the whole history of the Eucharist. You know it begins with Melchizedek offering bread and wine. On this side is an Old Testament. Then on that side of the Old Testament it's the Passover which we heard tonight in the first reading. And then we get to the New Testament with the wedding feast at Cana and then the Eucharist.

And so it's to always remember when you walk into our beautiful church that we look into the past because the past reminds us how much we were loved and are loved, and what it costs our God to love us. More so, it shows us that there has never been a time where God has not been with us; that God has not been doing everything in His power as God to save us. There's never been a moment where God's sitting back and saying, "Okay, let's see what they can do by themselves." He's always working, every moment of the past to do everything He can to save us. And when we

remember this past, we remember that it's the same today. That God is still doing everything in His power to help you and save you. That there's never a time when God just sits back in your life and says, "Okay, we'll see what they can do by themselves." He's always doing everything to help you. First thing.

The second thing is that when this memory, it's not like just something, we don't just remember what He did in the past. "Do this in memory of Me." When we do this in memory of Me we make the past present today. That's why tonight we have an encounter with Christ. And it's a personal encounter. I think that if I could get anything around to what the Mass is more than anything is that it's not just some ritual that we do because He said, "Do this" so I'm gonna do it. No. Every time we come to Mass what you and I say tonight is not, "Oh, Lord, I'm here because it's Triduum and we always do this every year on Holy Thursday." If that's the only reason you're here you're missing the point!

You and I are here and we look at Jesus and we say, "Jesus, I remember You. Jesus I know that the reason I'm here tonight is because of You. Jesus I'm not just going to let You in the past, I want to remember you so much tonight that I encounter you today, not just in the past." And that's the greatness of the holy Mass: that the God of the universe, Jesus Christ, humbles Himself and makes present today in this very hour what He did 2,000 years ago.

I would submit to you, ladies and gentlemen, that what we do tonight is more profound for us than it was for the apostles. The apostles, I'm sure, didn't get it. They're sitting around having some fine time, having a nice Passover dinner, there's four cups of wine, and they're all doing their thing. And Jesus says this is My Body – they hadn't a clue, because in reality He had not yet died yet. They didn't realize what this meant. When He said, "This is My Body." We realize it. We realize how much that was going to cost Him.

And so, when we also come to the experience that that same Jesus who was with them that night at the Last Supper is the same Jesus who's here with us tonight. And the same Jesus who will feed you with His Body and Blood not just so you can go on and do your own thing, but so that He can live inside of you and me. He's wants this encounter tonight to be so real that we no longer live, but Jesus lives inside of us. That this encounter becomes so real that when I embrace Him in Eucharist and He embraces me and you, that we become one. This memory brings forth what happened 2,000

years ago to such an intimacy tonight - an intimacy that you and I are never alone. You and I are always with the Lord Jesus, and He's always with us.

Finally, this remembrance is only made real, if you will, or made relevant if you will when we live it. So Jesus says, "Sit there and do this in remembrance of Me." He's now saying to you and I, "what I have done", as you heard in the Gospel today. It wasn't just something that we go and we renew this every year and isn't it nice to go up and wash feet and everybody goes, "Oh, I'm glad he didn't ask me to wash my feet because I wouldn't want him to wash my feet," and all that kind of stuff. Whatever it is, that's not why we just do that. We're sitting there saying this: what He did in the past, what He did in the Eucharist, what He encounters with us tonight, He now wants us to live this reality.

And we live this reality by giving away our lives in service for others. And so what you and I are called to do now - if again this is all you do, if we come here tonight, we watch this, we're at the thing, oh yea that was very nice, you go and do some stuff, oh that was nice. If that's all it is, again, what's the point? What you and I are called to do is now live this reality. Live this reality not just during Holy Week but every day of our life. That I become the servant, because Jesus says, "You see what I did? As I have done, so you *must* do." Not so should you do, or try to do - so you *must* do. So you and I, if this Eucharist will be real tonight - and any time we receive the Eucharist we must then go forth and live the Eucharist. And the way we live the Eucharist is by giving away our life the way He gave away His life for you and me. So you and I give away our life for our family, our friends, our enemies, our world.

So tonight, when Jesus looks at you and me and says, "Do this in remembrance of Me", remember all the past that brought up to that moment how we're never alone. Remember that our remembrance becomes so real that we have the encounter of the living Christ right now, tonight, and it's a remembrance that we live every time we leave the Mass. Again if we do this, Holy Thursday isn't just something we do once a year. Holy Thursday is something we do every time we go to Mass. And it will be transformative. And then every time we come to Mass, hopefully a little more we become less and He becomes more.

May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.