

home the fidelity of Almighty God, the steadfastness of His love, and power of His continued victory. What rock can stand in the way of that powerful love?

We rejoice in that victory and we give profound thanks, because we are able to celebrate the mystery of His love together when so many others are prevented from doing so by the power of an unforgiving virus.

Secondly, twice St. Matthew's account of this early morning event sends the message: Do not be afraid. The angel calms the women with that message and the Risen Lord does the same thing.

That message must resound in our day in the face of the anguish of the uncertain future, the multiple deaths, and the shuttering of so much that seemed so important a month ago. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. His victory is ours and our homeland ultimately is in heaven.

Fear breeds self-preservation and control. That is not the good soil in which the Gospel can flourish.² Committed discipleship obliges us to break forth from the tomb of fear so as to take His presence into our world. Especially at a time of crisis our eyes are opened to the heroic attitudes of so many.

We rediscover the courage of Father Capodanno on the battlefield when he reminded his Marines that God is with us. Walking forward, we must also inspire that confidence. The invitation to fear not is repeated 366 times in the Bible. It must be so, because we needed to hear it and more importantly to live it, even in the face of the unknown.

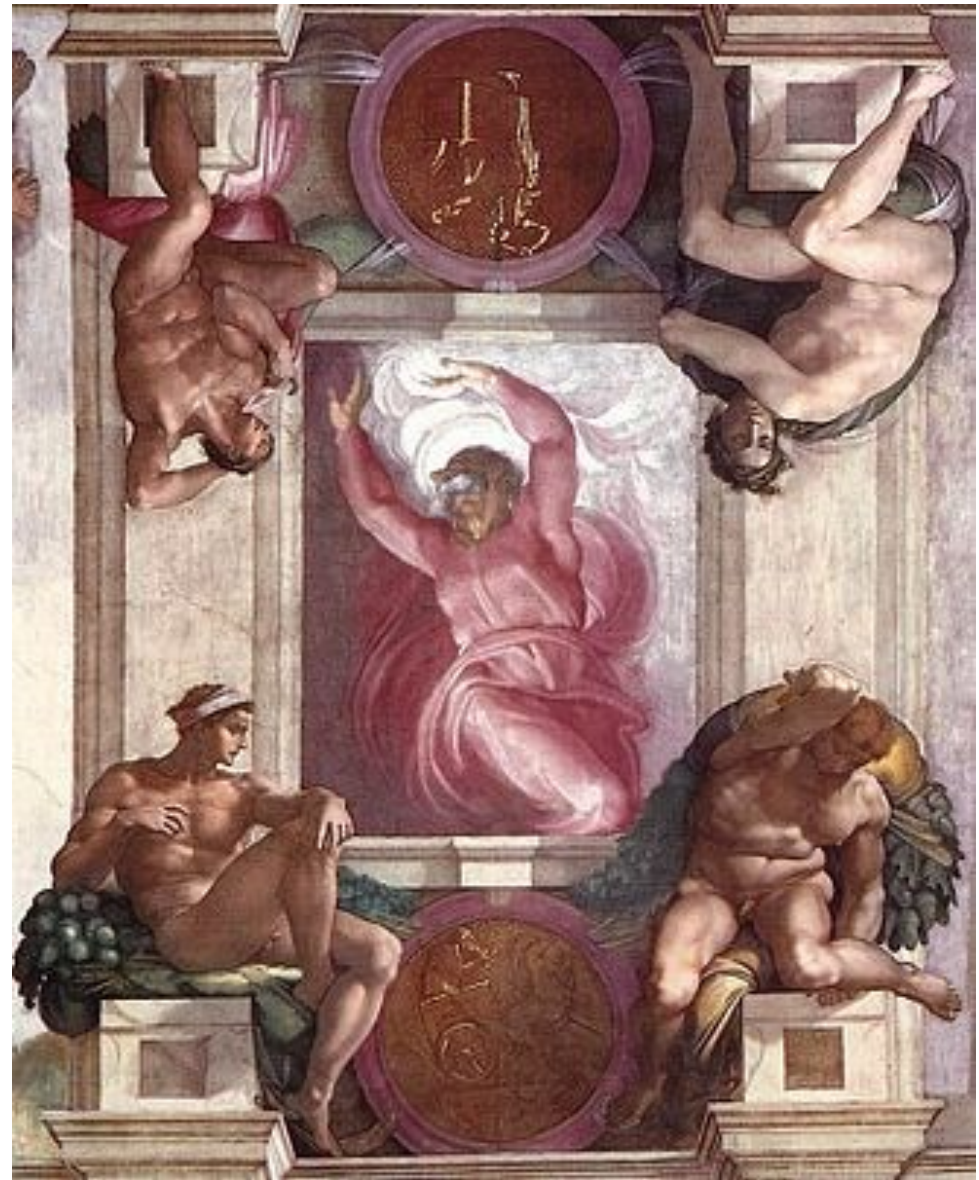
Michelangelo knew that Christ was the ultimate light able to overcome any darkness. His light enables us to move forward without fear.

Have a blessed Easter!

Notes

1 Romano Guardini, *La Pascua*, p. 37.

2 Cf. Daniel Mueggenborg, *Come Follow Me*, A, pp. 87 and 90.



Light in the Darkness: The Homilies of Holy Week

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Homily

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Cover: Michelangelo, Separation of Light from Darkness, 1512, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_Light_from_Darkness

Page 2: AMS Chrism Mass, March 31, 2020, Edwin Cardinal O'Brien Pastoral Center, Washington. Photo by Mr. Taylor Henry.

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Page 10: Tintoretto, Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet, 1548–1549, Museo del Prado, Madrid. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Washing_the_Disciples%27_Feet_\(Tintoretto\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Washing_the_Disciples%27_Feet_(Tintoretto))

Page 15: Guido Reni, Crucifixion, 1619. San Lorenzo in Lucina, Rome. Source: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/guido-reni/crucifixion-1619>

Page 20: Raphael, The Resurrection of Christ, 1499–1502, São Paulo Museum of Art, Brazil. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_of_Christ_\(Raphael\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_of_Christ_(Raphael))

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The Word of God has been abundant during this vigil and so the word of man must be commensurately short. Think about the Sistine Chapel and fresco of creation on the ceiling. The separation of light from darkness is right over the altar where the Eucharist would be celebrated. The design is not accidental. Michelangelo knew what would be celebrated beneath his painting. Christ's triumph over sin and death, the victory of light over darkness, is made present in every celebration of the Eucharist.

We keep vigil tonight to celebrate most solemnly this victory, and we want to make it our own. We might take two things with us from this Gospel passage. The first is the stone covering the entrance to the tomb, and the second is the repeated message to the women: "Do not be afraid."

The angel is seated on the massive stone whose placement Pilate ordered to seal the tomb. It has become a throne for this heavenly messenger. The message for us is that no obstacle is sufficient to keep us from Christ.

Lenten preparation and austerity have allowed us to clear away the superfluous and center ourselves on the essential. All of those rocks are insufficient to block our access to Christ or His desire for us. As Father Guardini wrote: "We do not only hear things about the [night of Resurrection] but we participate in the experience which gives it life. Now it is near because that which He did and what happened is a divine action destined to penetrate ever in a new way the Christian experience at the moment of the sacred celebration."¹

At this point, then, it does not matter if our Lent has been fruitful, austere, empty, or self-serving. What does matter is that we stand open and ready to welcome the Savior of the world.

The story of creation, the sacrifice of Isaac, the liberation in the Exodus, the new creation of a heart of flesh, and Paul's description of the transformational effects of baptism have brought



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Chrism Mass

31 March 2020

Reading: Isaiah 61:1–3a, 6a, 8b–9
 Psalm Response: Psalm 89:21–22, 25, 27
 Reading: Revelation 1:5–8
 Gospel: Luke 4:16–21



The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

11 April 2020

Reading I: Genesis 1:1—2:2
 Psalm Response: Psalm 33:4–5, 6–7, 12–13, 20, 22

Reading II: Genesis 22:1–18
 Psalm Response: Psalm 16:5, 8–11

Reading III: Exodus 14:15—15:1
 Psalm Response: Exodus 15:1–6, 17–18

Reading IV: Isaiah 54:5–14
 Psalm Response: Psalm 30:2, 4–6, 11–13

Reading V: Isaiah 55:1–11
 Psalm Response: Isaiah 12:2–3, 4–6

Reading VI: Baruch 3:9–15, 32—4:4
 Psalm Response: Psalm 19:8–11

Reading VII: Ezekiel 36:16–17a, 18–28
 Psalm Response: Psalm 42:3, 5; 43:3–4

Reading: Romans 6:3–11
 Psalm Response: Psalm 118:1–2, 16ab–17, 22–23
 Gospel: Matthew 28:1–10

us to forgive others, especially those who ask for our forgiveness. That, too, is a long journey. When the pain is great, then the healing is much longer.

Recently we have all been struck by the images of suffering provoked by the coronavirus around the world. The pictures are devastating and the numbers in the news are worse. We live in a dilemma that none of us could have predicted. We wonder if life will ever be normal again. Is it all over?

Those are sentiments of Good Friday. That is the reaction of St. John and women at the foot of the cross. Jesus says it clearly and truthfully: it is finished. He has gone to the fullest extent that love permits and all of the Sacred Scriptures are accomplished. "This is the glory of Jesus: the glory of loving, the glory of doing the will of the Father, the glory of saving humanity."⁴

Christ is revealed to us in a unique way when we suffer, because we are given to know Him more fully. Without this dimension we would not have access to Him in His totality. As Pope Francis reminded us, we remain a people of hope and this is a place of hope: "hope because your sacrifice continues, still today, to emit the perfume of divine love which caresses the hearts of many young people who continue to consecrate their lives to you, becoming living examples of charity and gratuitousness in this world of ours, devoured by the logic of profit and easy earnings. . . ."⁵

We see that love concretely in the commitment of emergency responders, medical personnel, and our beloved men and women in uniform and their chaplains. We give thanks for their commitment to humanity and their willingness to look beyond self.

We pause now and rest not in Jerusalem, but here in the presence of the one God who loves us and sent His Son for our salvation.

Notes

1 Sebastian White, *Magnificat*, 21:1, p. 1.

2 Marc Ouellet, *Il dono della comunione*, p. 158.

3 Earl Boyea, "The Wounded and Risen Lord is the Key," *Faith Magazine*, December, 2018.

4 Albert Vanhoye, *Le letture bibliche delle Domeniche, Anno C*, p. 107.

5 Francis, Message after the Via Crucis, 30.III.18.

Homily

Brothers and Sisters,

On Friday the world watched while the Bishop of Rome blessed his city and the world with the Most Blessed Sacrament after offering a thought-provoking reflection on the current health crisis that forces us to celebrate the annual Chrism Mass in the confines of this chapel. He could not have chosen a more Catholic gesture or a more spirit-filled and powerful way to bless a suffering world.

This annual celebration of our priesthood calls us to consider the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and ministry in gratitude for His gifts, and a real fatherhood in this time of crisis. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" is proclaimed in both the first reading and the Gospel. We experience that Spirit in the ordinary moments of our lives when we make the right decisions, speak the usual words, accomplish the tasks before us, and discern what is true in this confused, formerly noisy world. It is good to reflect on the presence and the action of the Spirit, especially when our lives fall out of their routine.

Those of us who have been gifted with ordination know how the Spirit works in our ministry. We have experienced when He provides the necessary word, gives that extra impulse at the end of a long day, or pushes us out the door when one more need makes itself felt. How I have seen the Holy Spirit at work as our chaplains strive to meet legitimate needs in a time of crisis or heard about the heroic deeds accomplished by legendary chaplain figures.

As St. John Henry Newman said so eloquently: "The ministerial orders are the ties which bind together the whole body of Christians in one; they are its organs, and they are moreover its moving principle."¹ This afternoon we celebrate that mission assured by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Essentially, we gather for the blessing and consecration of the oils that will be used around the world in this global archdio-

cese. They will be the instruments used at baptism, confirmation, and at the bedside of those who are ill or infirm or on the battlefield for the wounded. They remind us of our commitment to service. At priestly ordinations our hands were anointed and the bishop prayed: “The Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, guard and preserve you that you may sanctify the Christian people and offer sacrifice to God.”²

We never forget that the anointing is for the service of sanctifying others and the offering of sacrifice. Both go together. We can never be like those applying for domestic service in an earlier age who announced, “I do not do windows.” No, the priesthood includes all of it whether we are in an office, on a military installation, in a VA hospital, a classroom, or a parish. The charge is to be all things to all.

Last year Pope Francis described our ministry with great eloquence: “I confess to you that whenever I confirm and ordain, I like to smear with chrism the foreheads and the hands of those I anoint. In that generous anointing, we can sense that our own anointing is being renewed. I would say this: We are not distributors of bottled oil. We have been anointed to anoint. We anoint by distributing ourselves, distributing our vocation and our heart. When we anoint others, we ourselves are anointed anew by the faith and the affection of our people. We anoint by dirtying our hands in touching the wounds, the sins and the worries of the people. We anoint by perfuming our hands in touching their faith, their hopes, their fidelity and the unconditional generosity of their self-giving. . . .”³

Yes, today we give thanks for the sacraments of the Church and for our call to administer them *in persona Christi*. It is curious that we do so at a time when so many of us are restricted in our ministry. Perhaps it gives us a sense of the experience of Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan, locked in solitary confinement, or Father Emil Kapaun, imprisoned with his men, or those bishops and priests of Lithuania who devised all sorts of methods to celebrate the Eucharist in the gulag and distribute the Lord to their hungering faithful.

faithful to go the extra mile for a value greater than self. When we align our suffering with that of Christ, we begin to discover the meaning and the actual price of love. We also begin to walk with Him and to be formed by Him. We learn that the Paschal Mystery is the most specific and perfect act of love that world has ever known and will ever know.¹

You cannot hear the word of God this afternoon and not be certain that you are truly loved. Regardless of where you are in your spiritual journey or on the pilgrimage of Lent, this day shouts out in the sober silence of the liturgy: you are loved, you are important, you are worth the effort of the supreme sacrifice on the part of the Lord.

The passage from Hebrews insists on the sacrificial nature of Christ’s passion and death, but it is consummated outside of a place of worship. It is a horrible price paid for my sins, but opens the door to forgiveness and a new start. It gives new meaning to the mystery of death — so much in our thoughts and prayers in this time of pandemic.

As Cardinal Ouellet wrote: “The Lord is dead among the dead, which means that He completely shares their condition of isolation, solitude, and absolute passivity, characteristics of the condition of the dead.”² The victory would come later.

Thus, John’s Gospel places the passion of Jesus in the Book of Glory. It is strange, but for St. John the Passion, Death, and Resurrection are rolled into one saving event. Together the glory of the hour is to have loved to the very end. It is a powerful concept, but made poignant by the fact that you and I are the subject of that love.

Of course, Jesus’ wounds were the means, the instrument for our salvation and that of the Church. “Ideally, the wounds that all of us have from our own sinfulness, a sinfulness of which we have repented, would serve to remind us of Christ’s deep love for us. He was without sin and yet wounded for us out of pure love. When our wounds are due to others’ sins, it is not so easy³ to place our suffering within Jesus’ wounds, even though He lovingly invites that.”

Good Friday opens the door for our forgiveness and teaches

Homily

In January 2019 I had occasion to visit the Holy Land on behalf of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of the US. It was essentially a visit to the “living stones,” the communities that maintain the Catholic faith in the land where Jesus walked.

However, the first morning, knowing that the schedule did not allow for too many visits to the traditional sites, I rushed over to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and went up to Calvary to say a prayer and stood praying outside the empty tomb, as well. It was an occasion to reflect on the love of Almighty God for us and to pray for all of those entrusted to my pastoral care. To my utter amazement I was greeted there by a priest ordained by me, who was on pilgrimage with a group of his parishioners.

Later that same afternoon after Mass in Bethlehem I managed a walk down to the Garden of Olives and the Church of the Nations, which marks the place of the Agony in the Garden. It was once again an occasion to reflect on how much we are loved. No price for our salvation was too great.

Now we have arrived at Good Friday and have heard the Song of the Suffering Servant, a passage from Hebrews on Sacrifice, and the Passion of our Savior according to St. John. In the starkness of the Good Friday liturgy we are invited to consider the value of suffering and the renewal of our commitment, despite the challenges.

You know, our society does not put much value on suffering. Everything is supposed to be easy. We get annoyed by slow computers, traffic, delays, and being put on hold. What sense does it make to suffer? We have been forced in these days to be isolated and to have our precious freedom corralled into narrow limits not of our choosing.

Yet, training, PT, commitment — all of the aspects of life for the military we are privileged to serve — require giving of oneself. They involve sacrifice for a higher goal. They compel our

Deprivation and restriction help us to appreciate what we have and what we lost. The penitential nature of Lent took on a new form this year and we must think and pray for those who cannot participate in the celebration of the Eucharist or receive divine pardon in the confessional.

Ordination oriented us to others and gave us a mandate so eloquently imaged in the pressing of the olive to give its rich oil. The mandate is to be squeezed so as to pour out divine life in the sacraments for others. As we celebrate today I thank you for your ministry and for the commitment that you will renew in a few moments. The Chrism Mass is a moment to look back and to be renewed in the present.

As I mentioned, we do so in a time of crisis and in the face of the unknown. That makes it even more important to reflect on the fatherhood inherent to the priesthood and that role in a moment of crisis. I remember the school principal bringing me two eighth-grade boys caught fighting in class. She was disappointed that I was not harder on them! There are other times when we are merely asked for a word of wisdom or the impossible reason why. We have all experienced those moments when we are called upon simply as the father of a community of faith or as the one sent so clearly identified in the Scriptural passages of this day.

The military prepares for and responds well to crisis, but this enemy is new and separates us from those we love. It stiffens us when we want to reach out. It seeks to dry that oil that normally lubricates and facilitates our movement. Because unknown and unseen, it can fill us with fear. We must draw on the Spirit so evident in both the inaugural discourse of Jesus in the Synagogue and in Second Isaiah as he animates the return to the Promised Land after the Babylonian Exile.

Our call clearly is to lead, to sanctify, and to teach. As the Bishop of Rome said last Friday: “You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard

to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people — often forgotten people — who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time. . . .”⁴

To my brothers here present and those who are diligently serving throughout the world, I say: do not be afraid; and to all I urge that we never forget the constant assurance of Father Capodanno: “God is with us.”

Notes

¹ John H. Newman, sermon “On the Unity of the Church,” in *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, p. 1554.

² “Ordination of Priests,” in *Rites of Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons*, second typical edition, n. 133.

³ Pope Francis, Homily at the Chrism Mass, 18.IV.19.

⁴ Pope Francis, Meditation, 27.III.20.

Good Friday of the Lord’s Passion

10 April 2020

Reading:	Isaiah 52:13–53:12
Psalm Response:	Psalm 31:2, 6, 12–13, 15–16, 17, 25
Reading:	Hebrews 4:14–16, 5:7–9
Gospel:	John 18:1–19:42



Notes

¹ Peter Vaghi, *Meeting God in the Upper Room*, pp.12-3.

² St. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 1, 3.

³ Pope Francis, Homily, 30.V.13.

⁴ Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*, p. 129.

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion 5 April 2020

AT THE PROCESSION OF PALMS

Gospel: Matthew 21:1–11

AT MASS

Reading: Isaiah 50:4–7

Psalm Response: Psalm 22:8–9, 17–18, 19–20, 23–24

Reading: Philippians 2:6–11

Gospel: Matthew 26:14–27:66



Homily

Normally Joint Base Andrews would be the station for opening Holy Week in the AMS, but the current situation obliges us to celebrate here in a more restricted setting. Palm Sunday and the Passion according to St. Matthew is very much like standing before a groaning banquet table with a dessert plate. Where do I begin, and what will fit in a homily on such an abundant word.

We remember at the beginning of this singular week that we are all presented with a choice and opportunity.

In 2011 Pope Benedict XVI made an observation:

“The Fathers of the Church maintained that human beings stand at the point of intersection between two gravitational fields. First, there is the force of gravity which pulls us down — towards selfishness, falsehood and evil; the gravity which diminishes us and distances us from the heights of God. On the other hand there is the gravitational force of God’s love: the fact that we are loved by God and respond in love attracts us upwards. Man finds himself betwixt this twofold gravitational force; everything depends on our escaping the gravitational field of evil and becoming free to be attracted completely by the gravitational force of God, which makes us authentic, elevates us and grants us true freedom.”¹

The Passion according to St. Matthew makes the notion of choice on the part of Jesus very clear: He does not come down from the cross to save Himself but remains there to save us.

So St. Thomas Aquinas writes that the wounds of Jesus “offer us a choice: either to be condemned with those who inflicted the wounds and pierced Christ’s side . . . or to repent and enter into the open side of Christ to dwell there, for it has become a haven of rest.”²

Truth has value and is important. We may find that idea that truth has a value moot today in the face of mountains of information, exploitation of facts for a desired result, and the absence of criteria to judge the same information. The current situation

Supper through His gift of Himself. God’s bountiful distribution of gifts takes on a radical quality when the Son communicated and distributes Himself in the form of bread. . . . Thus breaking bread and distributing It — the act of attending lovingly to those in need — is an intrinsic dimension of the Eucharist.”⁴

Indeed care for the poor and the hungry has always been the hallmark of our faith. The diaconate itself was established to assure the care of those in need. As a community of faith we try to help others with concrete gestures and through the organizations established for that purpose. Catholic Charities, CRS, and a host of other organizations strive to help us in the quest of meeting the needs of others.

Finally, we take the Bread of heaven and call on the Name of the Lord. Ultimately, the Eucharist invites us into an intimate presence with the Lord. It is a foretaste of the end of our journey where we hope to dwell forever in paradise.

We must not be distracted on this journey. Devotion to the Eucharist keeps us focused. That is why the early Church eventually had to mandate weekly attendance at Mass, lest the fervor for a lasting dwelling place smolders.

The challenge of living the Gospel in our world is not easy. We can be distracted by other pursuits. We can be tempted by the materialistic culture in which we live. We might be deterred by the demands of the Gospel, especially in a world so tense with animosity, selfishness, and injustice. So we take the Bread of Life, and we try to imitate the example of the Lord Jesus who came not to be served but to serve.

The celebration of Holy Thursday at St. Ann Parish in my youth tried to elevate minds and hearts to an awareness of the Lord’s call to imitate Him in order to share in eternal life. Tonight we celebrate the same essential mystery. The details are different, but the message is unchanged. The Lord gives us food for the journey, saves us from sin, and teaches us to imitate His charity to others.

ver, which became an annual celebration to make succeeding generations present for the initial act of God's saving benevolence. With a powerful gesture, Almighty God slew the first born of those whose houses were not marked with the blood of the lamb. The Chosen People were set free and began their exodus to the Promised Land.

The Paschal Lamb slain is a figure of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, who shed His blood so that we might live. He gives us His Flesh for food and His Blood for drink. We need that nourishment if we are going to be able to walk the path which leads to life. The Chosen People needed the food God provided in the desert; we need the precious nourishment found in the Eucharist if we are to be able to walk on the path to life without end.

What do we find on this path to life everlasting? We find others whom we are called to serve. St. John places the washing of feet where the other Evangelists place the narrative of institution of the Eucharist. He centered the washing of the feet in his highly symbolic text.

Make no mistake! St. John wanted us to understand that what we receive in Holy Communion, amply explained in Chapter VI of his Gospel, provides the strength to serve. We receive His Body and Blood so as to have the strength to complete our journey and to minister to our brothers and sisters.

Pope Francis leaves no room for doubt. "The Lord in the Eucharist makes us follow His path, that of service, of sharing, of giving — and what little we have, what little we are, if shared, becomes wealth, because the power of God, which is that of love, descends into our poverty to transform it. Let us ask ourselves . . . do I let myself be transformed by Him? Do I let the Lord who gives Himself to me, guide me to come out more and more from my little fence, to get out and be not afraid to give, to share, to love Him and others?"³

The link between the Eucharist and giving of ourselves could not be stronger or clearer. Allow me to draw from Pope Benedict XVI. "Breaking and distributing: it is the act of distributing that creates community. This archetypally human gesture of giving, sharing, and uniting acquires an entirely new depth in Jesus' Last

makes hearing the Gospel so crucial if we are going to follow the Lord. With the suffering servant we recognize: "He opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back."

May the Lord open our ears.

Of course, we have to be attentive to the ways in which the Lord speaks to us. The chosen Apostles were asleep when they had been invited to participate in an intimate prayer between Jesus and His Father.

Their sleep might remind us of opportunities missed to be with a friend at a crucial moment, to avail ourselves of an opportunity provided by the Lord, to grow. As frequently happens during my talk at the discernment retreats for those considering a vocation as a chaplain — some poor young man has spent the day before on planes in steerage and is exhausted and falls asleep.

Do we sleep before challenges, because it is not "nice" to disagree? Do we also flee because the going gets rough, like the Apostles in the garden?

A good Palm Sunday question is how can we remain awake in the practice of our faith? The Lord's passion makes us silent and a question surges — why?

Vicariously we enter the passion of so many who suffer, battle the coronavirus, are in anguish, or seek to heal. This week will be for us a particular time to pray for them, as well. Unlike the Apostles, we must not miss the opportunity to watch with the Lord and pray.

Our dessert plate is very small, but it will allow us to taste what the Lord offers and share it with others.

Notes

¹ Benedict XVI, Homily for Palm Sunday, 17.IV.11.

² As quoted by Peter Cameron, O.P. in *Magnificat*, 19:2, p.3

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper 9 April 2020

Reading: Exodus 12:1–8, 11–14
Psalm Response: Psalm 116:12–13, 15–16bc, 17–18
Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23–26
Gospel: John 13:1–15



As Holy Thursday was celebrated in my home parish when I was a child left a number of memories. One was the beautiful altar of repose with white fabric over the St. Joseph painting and ferns pinned to create a vivid mixture of satin and green. Flowers decorated the altar and the venerable palm plants, which appeared for every major event, were placed around the altar. The two candelabra with seven candles each flanked each other on the mensa. The tabernacle door was open.

During the solemn high evening Mass the boys' choir would sing a capella after the *Gloria*, which we have to do here, because we lack an instrument. In the huge church the sound seemed even more solemn. The combination of clouds of incense and candle wax added another dimension to the perception that this celebration was special and unique.

Times and sensual perceptions have changed, but we join with the whole Church on this night to return to the Upper Room, our origin as a community of faith. "In ordering His disciples to 'Do this in memory of me,' He not only instituted the Eucharist, He made the Apostles His first priests."¹ We commemorate the gift of two great sacraments on this night: Eucharist and holy orders.

Both are intimately related to each other. Both are essential in the formation of the Church. St. John Paul II reminds us of the importance: "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist. The Church was born of the paschal mystery. For this very reason the Eucharist, which is in an outstanding way the sacrament of the paschal mystery, *stands at the center of the Church's life*."²

Tonight we gather at this fusion of the Upper Room and Calvary to contemplate the Lord's unique gift of Himself, which strengthens us for service and offers us a foretaste of the experience of heaven.

The book of Exodus recounts the instructions for the Passo-