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| **In Mass we Come to Celebrate His Sacrifice** **Homily by Deacon Luis P. Villanueva for 8AM Mass on Wednesday, April 10, 2019 at St. Joseph Church, Devine, TX.-Fr. Antonio Hernandez**,Pastor-Readings: Daniel 3:14-20,91-92,95; Responsorial Psalm (Dn 3); Gospel: John 8:31-42 In the name of the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, amen. The Lord speaks to us today about remaining faithful to him that we may be freed from slavery and death. We heard in the first reading from the Book of Daniel how three Jewish men refused to fall down and worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue and how the Lord God saved these three young men from any harm after being thrown into a fiery furnace for their firm faith in God. It is a great success story and an example of how the three Jewish men didn't sacrifice their faith in God for the sake of pleasing the King, his friendship with him, other benefits, nor even for saving their very lives. In the gospel of today Jesus informs the Jews and us today who believe in him that freedom from slavery to sin and death comes from remaining in him in the Word), that we will be his disciples, get to know the Truth and the Truth shall set us free. As Catholic Christians we profess what we believe in when we recite our Profession of Faith, and today the readings from the Book of the Prophet Daniel, the Responsorial Psalm and from the Gospel according to John reconfirm why we believe what we profess in our Profession of Faith. We profess and believe in the only Triune God and as such should not worship any other god but remain firm in our faith. The Responsorial Psalm proclaims praise and glory to our Lord God and Father in the firmament of heaven: ***"Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, blessed is your holy and glorious name, blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory, blessed are you on the throne of your Kingdom, blessed are you who look into the depths from your throne upon the cherubim, and blessed are you in the firmament of heaven".***This verse gives testimony of how God performed mighty miracles in saving the Israelites from their slavery in        Egypt and in bringing them to their Promised Land, just as Jesus also saved us and is leading us to our                Promised Land. At every Mass we come together to celebrate the special remembrance of the Resurrection of Jesus and to offer the sacrifice of the most precious Body and Blood Jesus to our heavenly Father, for the forgiveness of our sins. This is what Jesus was saying in today's gospel to those Jews and to us today who believe in him "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free". This was a new teaching that the religious leaders of that time had not heard before and could not accept. This was the new Covenant, the new way to righteousness, to be set free from the slavery of sin. We celebrate feasts during holy week and are called to continue to repent of our sins, to grow and change towards holiness and to teach this Good News, that Salvation and eternal life can be attained by BELIEVING in JESUS, in his salvation sacrifice on the Cross and in living out all he has taught us. God bless you.  |