 **May 26, 2019 The Last Supper a Message of Hope**

**Homily by Deacon Luis P. Villanueva**

**for May 26, 2019 weekend Masses at St. Joseph Church, Devine, TX-**

**Fr. Antonio Hernandez, Pastor- Gospel: John 14:23-29**

Today’s Gospel is a message of hope for all of us. At the Last Supper, on the evening before his death, Jesus was preparing his disciples for his departure, telling them that he was going away but that he would not leave them orphaned.

Jesus had told them that in a little while the world would no longer see him but that his disciples would see him. And of course as we can imagine, the disciples all became terrified, fearful, full of anxiety and questions they wanted answers to. Judas wanted to know how come only they would be able to see him and not the world.

Today’s Gospel is Jesus’ answer to Judas’ question but in an indirect response different than what Judas expected. Jesus told them that whoever loved him would keep his word and that his Father would love him and both the Father and Jesus would make their dwelling in him.

To love Jesus means to keep his word and to keep his word means to keep his commandments and his commandments were/are to love and serve one another as Jesus had loved them/us. To live out these commandments would require the constant presence of Jesus in their/our lives.

Jesus knew then and now that we all would have need of his presence in order for them/us to cope with their/our troubled hearts, fears, anxieties, troubles, trials, adversity and dark times in our lives.

He knew some of us would be coming to Mass and would need Jesus in our midst when we are climbing up from depression, when our daughter or son has given up on the Church and don’t attend Mass anymore, or embarrassed because our son or daughter has left the Catholic faith for another religious faith, or have divorced or have broken marriages, or addicted to drugs or alcohol, or we ourselves are in that scenario.

That’s why Jesus was sent to us “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him”. (John 3:17)

And Jesus said “Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners”.

We have come to Mass to be comforted, to hear the word of God, with the millions of Catholics around the world joining together with all the angels and saints in heaven in the eternal unending sacrificial offering of the Holy Eucharist to our Heavenly Father, with our priests who are the only ones who are ordained to offer this sacrificial offering with Jesus, the High Priest, and Jesus, the Sacrificial and Unblemished Lamb.

We need Jesus in our midst when we are learning to live alone, when we are finding our way after the death of a spouse, a child, parent, or family member, when cancer strikes, when we are undergoing pain and illness, when we have someone very sick in the hospital, when we are stressed out and worried for our children serving in the military, border patrol or other services around the world, and many other challenges.

 Jesus gave us hope and promised three ways in which he would remain constantly in the lives of those who love him and undergoing these and many more struggles.

First, as an answer to Judas’ question of how Jesus would reveal himself to his disciples and not to the world and how his disciples would continue to see Jesus…Jesus promised that his Father and him would come and make their dwelling/their home with those who loved him. Most especially through the Sacraments and in particular the Sacrament of the Eucharist. “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him”. (John 14:23)

Secondly, Jesus promised that the Advocate, the Holy Spirit would teach them/us everything and remind them/us of all that Jesus told them/us. (John 14:26) The Holy Spirit guides us, and provides us with wisdom, knowledge and courage to follow Jesus and proclaim the Good News.

Third, Jesus promised to give them/us, his disciples, his peace, not as the world gives it does he give it. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. The peace the world offers is the avoidance of trouble or adversity, but the peace Jesus gives is his peace that gives us comfort and courage amid all of our fears, challenges, trials and tribulations.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid”. (John 14:27)

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you”. (John 15:7)

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you”. (John 15:16)

“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it”. (John 14:12-14)

We all need the love of Jesus and hope from him in all our daily struggles, the name Jesus means “Savior” and he came to save us from our sins through his death and resurrection and he is called “Emmanuel” which means “God with us” for he truly wants to be with us and in us. God bless you.