

Do this in memory of me 4/18/19

Dearly beloved in Christ, welcome to the night of the Last Supper, when the Lord Jesus, offers us the sacrament of his body and blood and commands his disciples to do it in memory of him. The Church teaches that in the words “do it in memory of me”, Jesus not only instituted the Holy Eucharist but also instituted the ministerial priesthood, entrusting to his apostles and their successors, the capacity to perpetuate in his memory, the unbloody form of the sacrifice of the cross.

In our first reading (Exodus 12:1-8,11-14), we hear about the story of how the passover took place among the people of Israel and the command they received from God to celebrate this event every year to commemorate their redemption from the land of slavery. Every family was to procure a lamb without blemish; all the lambs were to be slaughtered on the eve of their liberation. The blood was to be smeared on their lintels and doorposts, and they were to eat, all dressed up and ready for the journey of liberation. We see Jesus in the Gospel reading during a passover event with his disciples. We don't hear about the use of the one-year-old lamb, instead, we hear about the use of 'bread and wine'. Jesus takes bread, gives thanks and says 'this is my body'. Again, he takes the cup filled with wine and says the blessing and gives it to his disciples saying 'this is the new covenant in my blood, do it in memory of me' (Luke 22: 7-14). The object of the passover event shifts from the one-year-old lamb to the person of Jesus who becomes the real passover lamb whose blood saves his people from their enemy and leads them to redemption. If it was to be a one-time gesture or symbolism, Jesus would not have asked his disciples to do it in memory of him. He truly meant this to be the new way of worshipping God, no more lambs because he is the 'lamb of God' who takes away the sins of the world. Our responsorial psalm for today says 'our blessing cup is a communion with the blood of Christ' (1Corinthians 10:16).

At the last supper, there were two commands echoed by the master. The first was 'do this in memory of me' and the second is still connected to the first 'you must wash each others feet'. We are entrusted tonight with two commands and we need to be dedicated to both.

We should be conscious of what we receive in holy communion. The communion is a person, his name is Jesus. Anybody who accepts the invitation to dine with Jesus must also accept the call to be washed clean, over and over again by him. Remember what he said to Peter when he resisted the washing, 'if I do not wash you, you will have no part in me'. The Eucharist strengthens us to serve one another and to serve the cause of salvation.

May Jesus our bread of life renew us with his grace to be conscious of the one we receive in Holy communion.