

Holy Thursday Year A 9th April 2020

This year, as we give thanks for the great gift of the Holy Mass and Eucharist, we are also motivated by

charity to avoid gathering at the altar. As difficult as this is, it makes sense when we realize that the words “Body

of Christ” refer not only to Holy Communion but also to the elderly and infirm and all who are most vulnerable in

the current crisis. Jesus identifies his own Body with children: “Whoever receives a child in my name receives me.”

He identifies His own Body with those who are most in need – the hungry, the thirsty, the poor, strangers, prisoners,

refugees and the sick. He surely identifies his Body with those most vulnerable to the corona virus, including the

elderly and infirm. We remember his sacred words: “Whatever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto

me.” It is our hope that our sacrifice this year of staying away from one another may spare as many as possible

from great suffering and death.

Please know, as you gather this evening for prayer, that your Bishop and your priests are celebrating Mass

for you and presenting your needs at the altar at this very moment. The Mass is not just a remembrance of what

Jesus did on the night of the Passover almost 2000 years ago. The Mass is our share in the eternal offering of Jesus

Christ in love to the Father through the Holy Spirit. We are the Body of Christ. In offering Himself eternally to the

Father, he is also offering his own body, that is, he is offering us. From the Father we have received life and love,

mercy and salvation. With Jesus, we offer an eternal sacrifice of praise.

It was in a time of great distress that the Lord celebrated the first Mass. In this time of distress let us take

to heart these words from Psalm 116: "I suffered distress and anguish. Then I called on the name of the Lord:

"O Lord, I pray, save my life!" I kept my faith, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted"; and when I said in my alarm,

"no man can be trusted." How can I make a return to the Lord for all the good He has done for me? I will lift up the

sacred chalice, and call on the name of the Lord. I will offer you a Eucharistic Sacrifice and call on the name of the

Lord.

We trust that soon we will return to the altar, and rejoice once again to receive the Body and Blood of the

Lord, the great gift of love he gives to us that comes with a great promise:

"Whoever eats my Body and drinks my

blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day." Until that time, may this our sacrifice of isolation be an

occasion to remember the great unity we have through the gift of our Faith, the leadership of our Pope and Bishop

and Pastors, our charity for those in need, and our hearts united by fervent prayer. The gift of the Mass is the gift

of the Lord who unites us together in the Spirit. Let us give thanks for every priest who throughout our lives has

celebrated Mass for us and fed us with the Living Bread come down from Heaven.

Let us be with them in our hearts

as they celebrate Mass for us this evening, and let us pray that soon we will be united again as one family of faith

at the altar. Amen