

April 5, 2007  
Holy Thursday

Good evening! Tonight, finally when everything falls into place – it takes awhile sometimes with me, as all of you know. But, the reality of what happens tonight is the institution of the Eucharist. And every year, I have always spent time on the servant part – to focus on the washing of the feet. But this year I want to focus on the institution of the Eucharist, because it really is the most important thing and it encompasses everything else we talk about when it comes to servant-hood. And to do that, we need to focus on the second reading tonight. Does anybody know what the second reading was? It was from St. Paul and it was...about the institution narrative. He was reminding them what they do. And he talks about what Jesus did at that first Mass at the Last Supper. And what I want to focus on tonight is just the one little verse “this is my body...for you.” And I want to focus mostly just on the “for you.” That as we enter in and go all the way back, everything Jesus did was for you and for me. Everything - as we focused on the Passion Talk last night – if you were here – again it was the whole reality that everything Christ did, He did because He loved us. And then He says that “this is my body...all that I will ever be – this is my life – this is my being...this is everything.” So what it cost Jesus to love us is everything! And the only way that we can respond to that – to make it real – is for it to cost us everything. You know, so often people come – and when they think about Jesus and they want to follow Him and they become like “oh, I’m going to go down and take care of this, and take care of that...” But the first one we are called to minister to – always – is Jesus. Because the first one He ministers to in His life – always – is us. And if Jesus didn’t just sit there and say “I’d do it for everybody...” He looked at the apostles and said “I do everything I do for you...” Tonight at this Mass, on this very altar, we are going to take regular bread and say the words “this is my body, for you.” Have you ever just reflected on that? And do you just let that sink in – that everything He does at every Mass, He does for you. And if you’re not here – He hurts, because He did it for you and you weren’t here to receive it. That so much He just wants to be in this relationship of love – that’s all He wants, is for you and I to respond. So I think that the best thing that we can do as we come before Him tonight is to respond in the same way. If He says “this is my body, for you...” what that means for us is that we have to look at Jesus tonight and say “Jesus, here is my body...for you. Jesus, here is my body, here is my life, here is my soul, my family, my money, where I work, my pain, my joy. Jesus, tonight you say to me that you do everything for me. Well, tonight Lord, I want to respond in the same way. Tonight Lord, as you give your body for me, I, Jesus want to give my body for you. Do you see what happens when that happens to us? Everything changes, because what this Mass will cost you is your life. So, are you willing – are you ready to look at Him and not just say “oh, yea Lord, I’m going to take care of all these other people...” He says “shut up. I want you to minister to me tonight.” So will you and I begin this Mass tonight by saying “ok, Lord, here is my body, for you.” And so the first person we are called to minister to tonight here is Jesus Himself. And that is why afterwards, we always go around, those who want, to seven churches and we spend time with Him tonight. You know and again, some people get in the ritual – you don’t have to go from place to place, of course, but will you spend time with Him? Not say “you know I did my time, Father...” You know, people drive me crazy – not any of you – but other people drive me

crazy. And these other people who drive me crazy are the ones who go through the ritual of things. “I put my time in – here, stamp my card! I went to the Lord’s Supper. Not many people do that, you know.” “Ok, here is your card, you’re stamped.” But tonight, will it be more than that for you? Tonight will it be “ok, Lord, I do this for you, and I give you my body. I give you everything – for you Lord.” And so, to spend time with Him – to go around with us, if you are able to, or to just go next door. You know, every church in this area is open tonight at least until 11, 11:30, or 12. And so, you go to a place, you sit down – you don’t have to listen to Fr. Larry scream and yell like he likes to do. You don’t have to listen to any jumping up and down. You can go sit with Him and say “Jesus, I just want to be here tonight – for you. I just want to minister to you. I just want to be here for you – to make up for the apostles. Because the apostles - when Jesus went into the Garden to pray – He said “watch and pray with me...” They weren’t there for Him, they were there for themselves, and so they fell asleep. And He kept going back to them and said “can’t you give me an hour? Can’t you be with me? Can’t you spend time with me?” And so what happens is – they were not there for Jesus. So, tonight He calls you and me – He invites – He doesn’t push. He says “will you be here tonight – for me?” And so the first thing is “yes, Lord, everything I give you tonight – I give my body Jesus, for you.” So, the first place we are called to minister is to Jesus Himself. But then, as we sit there and focus on the washing of the feet that we just did here – and Doug helped me do – you know, it is a reminder that if I am going to sit there and “ok, Jesus, I do this for you, then that has to be carried out in service. And again service is something we do, even if we don’t feel like it. And you can always tell when you really don’t feel like it and you do it anyway. That is when it is really now, being a gift to God. You know, sometimes people sit there and say, “oh, I want to be a joyful servant and do all this stuff...” Well, I don’t know about you, but there are days I wake up and I say “I don’t want to serve anybody today. Forget it! I’m tired! I’m going to stay in bed.” And I can’t! I have to get up, I have to go over – I have to do what I have to do! And I have to look at Jesus and say “Jesus, I do this for you. It’s my gift to you. It’s my making real what I said the night of Holy Thursday. Lord, I give you my life – for you. Lord, I will serve your people for you. Lord, I will give up my life for them – for you.” So, tonight it is very simple. He calls us into this relationship and if you and I can truly enter into this Triduum and really mean it tonight... “Jesus, this is my body...for you.” Then it will be a life for a life. And then it will be a sacrament, because the true sacrament of marriage, if you will, is not when one person sits there and says to the other “honey, I do this for you...” It is when the other responds “and I do this, honey, for you.” Tonight is the same thing with Jesus Christ – to enter into relationship. A life for a life - service for a service. And we will truly live forever and experience Easter. Got it? Get it? Good! May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.