

## **Homily for Holy Thursday– April 9<sup>th</sup>**

Dear Friends,

These three days of celebration is a traditional remembrance of salvation history of Israel people and its fulfilment in Jesus and continue to redeem us. It is a great remembrance with our family who would help each other to trust in God through Jesus Christ.

Today we remember the 'Maundy Thursday' where Jesus celebrated the last supper with his loving disciples before his death. In that celebration, Jesus instituted three important things. I) the institution of the Eucharist, II) the institution of ministerial priesthood III) the promulgation of the commandment of love.

In the history, it was commemoration of two celebrations of thanksgiving. In ancient history, the descendants of Abel, who were shepherds, used to lead their sheep from winter pastures to the summer pastures after the sacrificial offering of a lamb to God. They called it Passover. The descendants of Cain, who were farmers celebrated harvest festival, where they offered unleavened bread to God. The Jewish Passover is the harmonious combination of those ancient communities' thanksgiving. God commanded the Jewish people to remember and celebrate it annually in view of their liberation from the bondage of slavery, exodus from Egypt and arrival of the promised land.

In the first reading, the Lord gave instructions to the community how to celebrate it with the family. God gave two important instructions. Prepare for the moment of liberation by a ritual meal and make a symbolic mark on the doorposts of their homes as an identity. This tradition is brought back as a focal point in the Eucharist.

In the second reading, St. Paul emphasized the tradition of Passover and the purpose of the celebration of the Eucharist. It was an unbroken tradition passed on, and it is to proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes again. It tells us the spirit of love and servanthood, which is the gift of the Eucharist.

In the Gospel, Jesus prepared the Passover for the disciples since he knew that his hour had come. Jesus washed their feet and told them to follow the model. In verse 34, Jesus says, love one another as I have shown you, so that everybody will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. This is a daily reminder to all of us. That is what we do in the daily Eucharist. The Eucharist is linking to washing of the feet, which gives us the meaning of service and humility. The whole chapter of John 6 explains the Eucharist as a daily sustenance. We have to stay together to remember it every day.

Today with the situation of covid-19, we are gathered as a family like of Israelites or the early Christians. Let us remember and share the story of our faith to our children.

I want to share two events that touched me. The first one was about my Pascal experience. During our seminary time, we used to do the Ignatius retreat that lasts for a month. During that retreat, we celebrated the Passover as it was instructed in the bible and we enacted the whole story. The junior of the class had to ask, "Why are we celebrating this?" The elderly person of the class will explain the whole story. I was the junior in the class. That brought to my mind the joy of the celebration of the Israel people. It was a real remembrance.

The second thing was, I attended the NA meeting once in our parish. Usually they do not have any outsiders except the NA. I got their permission to go. During their meeting, everyone repeated a similar phrase and shared their own story. I asked them why. They said that they remember their past life to reboot themselves and strengthen to new life and also motivate others to find a new life.

Jesus gave himself to redeem us and asked us to share one another the same redemption to find the true faith in us. Today let us as a family try to remember the Lord's story for us.

## **Homily for Good Friday – April 10<sup>th</sup>**

Today is called good Friday. What happened on Good Friday? Why this Friday is called Good?

Good Friday is a day of paradox because an instrument of death becomes the source of life. It is also a day of mystery because the sinless one became as sin; a day revealing mankind at its worst and God at His best. Ultimately on this day love conquers death.

The only day in the year where we don't celebrate the Eucharist. It is the service that we do. There are a lot of things to talk about this Friday. I would like to reflect three things about Good Friday today.

We have our own Good Fridays and they are not unconnected to what happened on Calvary two thousand years ago. Today with this stay safe at home order, I hear couple of women crying to me that they did not have an opportunity to receive communion.

What did Jesus undergo on Good Friday? The Gospels do not focus on the physical sufferings. (Maybe we have seen in movies- we imagine with that idea). Rather they focused His emotional suffering and humiliation. He is presented as lonely, betrayed, alone, helpless to explain himself, a victim of jealousy, morally isolated, mocked, misunderstood, stripped naked so as to have to feel embarrassment and shame, and yet, inside of all this, as clinging to warmth, goodness, and forgiveness. Good Friday is when darkness has its hour.

Let us think about our life today? Besides our physical suffering, how much emotional suffering we undergo some days. When we are lonely, sick in bed, or misunderstood as bad or wrong. When we are looked at with jealousy, made to feel shame, and so many others, whenever we are unfairly made to be a victim, when we are made to carry someone else's sickness, we are feeling what Jesus felt at Calvary and we are tasting the darkness of Good Friday. We are feeling in a way what Jesus felt on Good Friday.

The second thing I would like to reflect is to look at the cross. So many people looked at the cross. We read in the gospel, Simon helped him carry the cross. The soldiers looked at the cross. Jesus' mother and other women who stood by the cross looked at the cross. There were so many reactions of all these people. When you look at the cross, what is your reaction today?

The third point is that the cross gave the new life. By His death, Jesus brought new life to everyone. Jesus began his ministry (Luke 4: 16-19) announcing his release to captives and liberty to prisoners. From the cross, he offers release and liberty in the form of forgiveness and asks for mercy on those who crucified him. In total, God's love brings new life in the cross. As we are in the spring, let us bring the new life in the resurrection.

## **Homily for Easter Vigil – April 11<sup>th</sup>**

I wish you a happy and glorious Easter! Easter is a celebration of life. Life in all its fullness. Life in all its vibrancy, life in its totality. The resurrection of Jesus is an affirmation of fullness of life that God gives us. Jesus' resurrection gives us hope that our life will not end in death.

Today's liturgy symbolizes real meaning to life. It is a real remembrance of the people of Israel and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The new fire brings new light. That light overcomes the darkness. God was in the light to safeguard the people of Israel. God created the world with light. That light got rid of darkness and gave life to the people. The Passover journey gave a new life to

Israel people. Through prophet Ezekiel, God cleanses our hearts and gives us new life and renews the covenant with us.

Jesus resurrection gives a new life to the people, not only in the past but also in the present and the future. Resurrection goes out to the future but also challenges us to the present. This is depicted on the paschal candle. We have the letters 'Alpha and Omega' indicating that the Christ is the beginning and the end. The numeral of the current year refills all time present, past and future.

Amid all of this stressful situation, we need to celebrate the gift of life. Jesus has given a gift of new life by His resurrection. With His resurrection, Jesus enters a new level of existence. Death has no longer power over Him. Jesus overcame all his limitations. No earthly power could limit Him. God has given Him a new life through resurrection.

Tonight we did not do all the parts of the liturgy because of people not being present. But we celebrate all important dimensions of the paschal mystery.

Tonight I want you to reflect with me about Mary Magdalene, since she is a patroness to our church. Think about the pain of her who stood by the cross on Friday. It was a heartbreaking for her. No one was there to comfort her. Now she goes to the tomb and brings a new life to the disciples. Her voice brings a new life.

In the new life, we will be experiencing the power to overcome our limitations. We will be able to go beyond the restrictions and bring some new life to the family, parish and in the community.

In the new life, we need to have a new activity of bringing people into life. Secondly we need to bring hope to hopeless people.

In the new life, we will be experiencing a new bond of relationship in our family unity, transcending misunderstanding and can forgive one another. We will be able to realize the power of life.

When the women came to the tomb, they got the message, "Do not be afraid." Through the resurrection of Jesus, our fears will go away and will be strengthened by the Holy spirit. May The Risen Christ empower your life and give a new life throughout the season.

## Homily for Easter Sunday – April 12<sup>th</sup>

Joseph of Arimathea was a very wealthy Pharisee, a member of the Council, and a secret follower of Jesus. Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body after the crucifixion. Also, it was Joseph who supplied the tomb for Jesus' burial. I wonder if someone pulled him aside and said, "Joseph that was such beautiful, costly, hand-hewn tomb. Why on earth did you give it to someone to be buried in?" "Why not?" Joseph may have answered. "He only needed it for the weekend."

Dear friends,

Easter is the important celebration of our faith. It is beyond the time and space. Jesus Christ made new history forever to the whole humanity. He is the son of God who had all the power to do that. He has resurrected now for all of us from all our anxieties, fears, rejections, loneliness and other emotional issues we had. Everything has disappeared with Jesus' resurrection.

As we live in the human world, we need some witnesses for the events that happen beyond history. Jesus' resurrection was one of them. For example, when I started learning about Covid-19, there has been a big epidemic every hundred years. This happened in our life time. It has so many evidences now to say to the future generations.

Today's readings are the witnesses from three key people who knew Jesus well. From the first reading, we learned that Peter addressed the things, which happened about Jesus from the beginning to this point. He became the witness. It was official as he was the head of the apostles. He shared about commissioning them to preach to the people. He concluded his speech by affirming that everyone who believes in the Lord will receive forgiveness of sins.

In the second reading, St. Paul, even though he does not live in the group of Apostles, brought Gospel to the Gentiles. He witnessed by telling that we are all hidden with Christ in God. When he appears in glory, we will be there with him in glory.

In the gospel, we have another witness who walked through Jesus to Calvary. Mary Magdalene was there with Mother Mary. She came to the tomb in the early morning. She had to witness Jesus' resurrection. We will be reflecting the witnesses during Easter time. The one thing is common was that they all saw and believed it.

Today as we celebrate Easter, what do you see? How do you want to witness Jesus' resurrection? This is the time as a family where we can be a good witnesses or faithful disciples of Jesus' resurrection. What do you see that you can believe in?

This social distancing brings us together in mind and hearts as friends and families of Jesus Christ. By being healthy and staying home, we are witnessing to our neighbors by respecting their health. This gives us more time to witness our own faith to our spouses and children.

There are still some of them mourning for the loss of their loved ones, let this resurrection bring them peace and comfort. We can be a good witness by praying for them and reaching out to them if possible. This may be not in person but by other means of communication. Let us be productive disciples of Jesus by using the social media for the right and good reason.

May God bless us, bring us joy of Easter, and help us to be good witnessing disciples.