

PRAYER AND PONDERING POINTS

THE SACRED TRIDUUM 2020

HOLY THURSDAY, April 9, 2020

Rdg 1: Ex 12:1-8, 11-14

Here is where we get the very idea of “Paschal” as in Paschal Mystery, Paschal Vigil, Paschal Lamb. “Paschal” comes from the word “Pesach” in Hebrew which means “Passover.” The angel of death “passed over” their homes marked with the blood of the Paschal lamb. Ever after they were to remember how God delivered them from death. Jesus, of course, is our Paschal Lamb. His sacrifice, his blood saves us from eternal death. We remember at that meal where it is said: “Do this in memory of me,” the Mass.

Resp: Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18

The Response for this Mass is rich with Eucharistic allusions, beginning with very response itself: “Our blessing cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ,” taken from 1 Cor 10:6. “Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.” Who is more faithful than Jesus who became “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross,” from the second reading on Palm Sunday (Ph 2:8)? “To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving” (“thanksgiving in Greek is “Eucharist”).

Rdg 2: 1 Cor 11:23-26

This is the earliest account of the Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper, written about 55 AD. Paul points out that he “hands on” (from which we get the word “tradition”) what he himself received, namely that “on the night he was *handed over*” (again, that word) Jesus “took,” (gave) “thanks,” “broke” and (gave). The same fourfold action we find in other accounts in the Gospels of the institution of the Eucharist and of the feedings of the multitudes that anticipated the Eucharist. All this “in remembrance of me.” This remembrance (“anamnesis” in Greek) means “proclaim(ing) the death of the Lord until he comes.” It means making present in our lives, in our world – by our lives, in our world – Jesus Christ in his once and for all sacrifice for the salvation of the world. **THIS** is what we do in Eucharist, in Thanksgiving, in Mass.

Gospel: Jn 13:1-15

Here is where we see John’s Jesus in full glory. “Jesus knew that his hour had come.” This was the hour for which he waited, the hour that brought to fullness his whole mission (“sent by the Father”), the hour of glory that included his Passion and Death, the hour ultimately of his Resurrection. Jesus, the Master, washed the feet of his disciples – the task of a slave. And then he says, “As I have done for you, you should also do.” This is how John wants us to know what the Mass is, who priests are, who we all are: loving servants of all, as he is saving servant of all.