

MAUNDY THURSDAY 2020  
HOMILY – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH  
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY  
*1 CORINTHIANS 11.23-26 ST. JOHN 13.1-15*



*DO THIS UNTIL I GET BACK...*

Maundy Thursday commences the *Paschal Triduum*...the three day period preceding Easter during which we commemorate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. While we are sheltered-in-place and Masses at Saint Joseph Parish are temporarily suspended...let's take some time to review what tonight is all about.

The Maundy Thursday Liturgy is a pivotal point during Holy Week. The Liturgy begins on a high note...the Celebrant wears white vestments...the *Gloria in excelsis* not heard since the last Sunday after Epiphany is said or sung. White is the symbol of joy and life.

The word *Maundy* is derived from the Latin *mandatum*...*mandate or command*...the day Jesus gives us a new *commandment*...DO THIS...he says...until I get back. We understand the word command means this is not optional...we do what all Catholic Christians have done through two millennia.

There are actually two commands Jesus actually gives us tonight. The first command gives new meaning to the Passover Supper...Jesus took bread and when he had given thanks he said, "This is my body, broken for you"...then he took the cup and gave thanks again and said, "This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you...do this as often as you get together...until I get back".

Jesus is the Lamb of God of our Passover Feast and through the shedding of his blood...he is our "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world"...once and for all...for all time...an action which can never be repeated.

The second command is remarkable and caught the disciples off guard. It was customary for the dinner host to furnish a bowl of water and towel for his guests to wash the dust off their feet. Jesus turns this around...in an act of Divine humility...insists on washing his disciples' feet.

Peter objects to our Lord washing his feet. "Peter", Jesus said, "if you don't let me wash your feet...you can't be my disciple. I'm doing this so you will all know what it really means to follow me. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you. I'm doing this to show you what it really means to love another person."

Jesus gives us a new commandment...we are to love each other as much as he loves us...when we DO THIS...we are honoring his command. Christian love is all about doing what's best for others...like sheltering-in-place.

The commandment Jesus gives us to love each other is unconditional...we may not place any restrictions on who we choose to love...Jesus' love for us is what tonight is all about...we may not keep his love to ourselves...we must gladly share it with others.

The Maundy Thursday Liturgy began on a high note and concludes on a somber note. There is a marked shift in the mood of the Liturgy...there is uneasy anticipation for what will happen tomorrow...Good Friday.

Normally the Blessed Sacrament is carried to the Altar of Repose...our version of the Garden of Gethsemane. Wherever we are tonight...we take time this evening to do the one thing Jesus asks of us...spend just one hour with him.

The Liturgy concluded...the High Altar is stripped bare and washed. The candles are extinguished. The Tabernacle...God's house...is left open and empty. The lights are turned off...there is silence and darkness...but not hopelessness or despair.

Tonight we thank Jesus for the gift of his Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar...and renew our commitment to keeping his commandment to love others as much as he loves us. We will...

*...DO THIS UNTIL HE GETS BACK!*

