

Thoughts from the Second Floor Front

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

April 14, 2019

The Most Holy Eucharist – Part II

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup.

(I Cor 11: 23 – 28)

Immediately before that passage, St. Paul castigates the Christians in Corinth. Evidently, from what we can read of St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians they simply did not understand. Do we? Do we fully understand what we are doing when we celebrate the Eucharist? Here is a simple test. Answer these questions: Do you regularly come to Mass late? And the follow up: Do you leave early? I would think that if you were going to a movie or a show you would make arrangements to be at the theater on time. If you made a reservation for dinner, you would work to be at the restaurant on time. Is not the celebration of the Eucharist more important than a night out? I have always asserted that people use their time in the same way they use their money: on things that really matter to them.

The Eucharist really matters; it matters the most.

Think about preparing for Mass before you leave your home. Read the Liturgy of the Word ahead of time. There are several publications that contain the readings and a commentary for the week, with meditations and prayer. Web site abound which refer to the readings for the Sunday Liturgy. Go to the web site for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (uscbb.org)

Try to arrive early. Get settled into the sacred space. When going on retreat, I find it takes a day or two to settle in; to pick up the thread of prayer and reflection to see where it will lead. Leaving the house in a whirlwind and expecting that the experience of Mass is going to be settling is probably not going to happen – without effort.

Make Sunday different from the other days of the week. In an Apostolic Letter from 1998, Pope St. John Paul II Wrote, in part:

Until quite recently, it was easier in traditionally Christian countries to keep Sunday holy because it was an almost universal practice and because, even in the organization of civil society, Sunday rest was considered a fixed part of the work schedule. Today, however, even in those countries which give legal sanction to the festive character of Sunday, changes in socioeconomic conditions have often led to profound modifications of social behavior and hence of the character of Sunday. The custom of the "weekend" has become more widespread, a weekly period of respite, spent perhaps far from home and often involving participation in cultural, political or sporting activities which are usually held on free days. ... Unfortunately, when Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes merely part of a "weekend," it can happen that people stay locked within a horizon so limited that they can no longer see "the heavens". Hence, though ready to celebrate, they are really incapable of doing so

(Dies Domini § 4)

Today, with the celebration of Palm Sunday we begin Holy Week. In a few days we will celebrate the moment when Jesus instituted the Eucharist on that Thursday we call Holy. I do hope you take the opportunity to join in the celebration of the essential and most important days in the Church's calendar: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Use those three days as a sort of mini-retreat. Focus on the Eucharist and the gift that we have in it. The gift of Jesus Himself.

The Eucharist really matters; it matters the most.

Faithfully,

Msgr. Diamond