

Tonight's liturgy is filled with signs and symbols,
sacraments and theology.

On this Holy Thursday we witness the institution of the Eucharist
And the institution of priesthood.

On this Holy Thursday we witness the very moving gesture of Jesus
washing the feet of his disciples.

In this Church, we have presented holy oils that will be used
in both of our chapels throughout the coming year.

Tonight's liturgy is filled with so much fragrance and incense and holiness that
a homilist is hard pressed to capture the essence of what we do,
Because what we do is so large, so magnified on a night like tonight.

One of the ways I prepare my homilies is that I use a preacher's forum
to help generate ideas.

It's actually called desperatepreacher.org

In looking over that forum for Holy Thursday night,

I was struck by a post that tried to capture the totality of this night.
The writer, focusing in on the theme of the Eucharist,
said that in the celebration of Eucharist, we really do three things:

We remember... We give thanks... and
We commit ourselves to Go.

And that made a lot of sense to me, because indeed we do those three things.

The Eucharist is about remembrance.

Each time we gather we fulfill Jesus' command, as often as you do this,
do it in remembrance of me.

As I think about that first Eucharist,

I am sure that Jesus was not afraid that he would be forgotten.

He was saying that for all of us...

those followers of his that would come generations down the line.

I think he was telling the twelve, keep this up...and I'll be remembered.

And so it is that 2000 years later we still gather, sharing his body and blood.

We gather and we remember...

When we gather we also give thanks....that's what Eucharist means...
thanksgiving.

We give thanks not only for all that we have,
but more importantly we give thanks for all that we are.

Individuals created in the image of God.

Male and female created in the image of God.

Rich and poor and in between,

various shades of black and yellow and white,

young, not so young, and some of us even a bit old.

We give thanks not only for who we are as individuals,

but also who we are as a group, the body of Christ...

As St. Paul said, "Neither Jew nor Greek, Slave nor free, man nor woman,"

And might I add neither former St. Paul's nor former St. Joe's...

Tonight we are ONE...and we give thanks.

Also on this Holy Thursday, we commit ourselves to service....

That's why in a few minutes we will be invited forward...

to have our feet washed and to wash the feet of another...

Like Simon, some of us will protest, and say, "not my feet."

And that is okay if you choose not to have your feet washed,

as long as you do refuse the call to service that accompanies it.

For tonight we recommit to being the hands of Christ

in reaching out to the poor and the hurting.

Tonight we recommit to being the arms of Christ

in embracing the sick, the forgotten, and the abused.

Tonight we recommit to being the heart of Christ

In searching out those who are lost, those who are ostracized

and those who are on the margins of our society, our parishes,

indeed our own families.

In short, tonight we commit to being Christ for one another.

IT was a beautiful post that my cyberspace friend wrote...

True enough in every sense of the word.

But the the very next post reminded me

that this first post was somehow incomplete.

In the next post, the author wrote that certainly all of that is true.

We do remember, we do give thanks and we do recommit.

But she also reminded the readers that this night is

not only about what **we do**, it is also about what **God does**.

It is God's action and God's grace that calls us to this night in the first place.

It is God's love and it's God's friendship

that invites us to remember and give thanks and commit to service.

And that cannot slip our mind....
That cannot be forgotten....
Because 2000 years ago, in a dusty upper room,
Jesus gathered with his friends and told them.
Do this in remembrance of me.
God's action then certainly precedes ours.

2000 years ago Jesus took bread and wine, blessed it, broke it, shared it,
saying this is my body...this is my blood.
And that is why we give thanks Sunday after Sunday...
Because Jesus showed us how.

2000 years ago, Jesus our savior, also became Jesus our slave
as he washed the feet of his disciples and said,
"Do you understand what I just did for you?
You call me teacher and Lord and fittingly enough for that is what I am...
If I who am teacher and Lord have washed your feet
you must wash each other's feet. I have given you a model to follow!"

My friends, those two postings on that website, tell us a very important truth.
Tonight is not all about what we do.
Tonight is not all about what God does.
Tonight is all about what we do because of what God has done.
It is that mingling together of divinity and humanity.
God with us... Us with God... **TOGETHER making all things new.**

Please God may it be so.