

Holy Thursday: 2024

“Spiritual Renewal and the Triduum”

Tonight, as we enter the holiest time of the Church’s Liturgical Year over the next 3 days, **the Sacred Triduum**, we are called to both commemorate and actually enter into the Sacred Mystery of the Last Supper which is actually the 1st Holy Mass celebrated by the great High Priest Himself: Jesus Christ, and that same Sacrifice of the Mass is offered by me, and all of you with your prayer intentions, right now too – truly amazing! **Secondly**, we are also commemorating when He ordained the first priests of the Church the Apostles. And then **finally** we remember when the Lord shows us by the symbolic Middle Eastern custom of washing the Apostles feet as a sign of humility and service. All three of these sacred gifts of the Lord Jesus to the Church and to us are very important to help us grow in the holiness He calls us to by our Baptism to have a real spiritual renewal as individuals and as a Church.

1. **The Eucharist:** is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (paragraph, 1324). Right now, we are in the middle of what the US bishops have called a Eucharistic revival or renewal to help all of us Catholics grow in our appreciation and Faith in the Lord Jesus’s **Real Presence** in the Eucharist; but for this to really occur, we as individuals must grow in our Faith and our interior life of prayer. **Believing in the reality of the Eucharist is not automatic - we must ask the Lord and put into practice the things that help us grow closer to Him therein.** Make a resolution to daily pray more, and to come to daily Mass more, as some have in Lent, and to the times of Eucharistic adoration we have here at St. Thomas: *the two Holy Hours each week and adoration after Mass on Mondays and after morning Mass on 1st Fridays.*
2. **The Priesthood:** as I pointed out a few months back right now we have no seminarians in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown! This is very bad, but the good to come out of it may be that the people of AJ not to take for granted the priesthood but work harder to pray and to promote vocations and appreciate the priests who are currently serving the Parishes. **What a divine gift the priesthood is** – as I have said many times – it is a sublime calling if the Lord is calling a man

to it! Just like the religious life is such a gift if God is calling a man or a woman to that. The ordained priesthood is meant to be a living sacrifice of the priest's life to help Jesus with Our Lady save as many souls as possible through the priest's prayer and sacrifice and works of charity; and all of you are called to unite the same things with me your Pastor as a beautiful oblation of love to the Lord as part of the priesthood of the Faithful. Let's ask the Lord to help all of us to be more generous in that regard in these spiritually dire times, which makes it a more beautiful offering and a golden opportunity for us to become God's new saints!

3. **Service:** The charity Jesus shows by the feet washing is symbolic of what we should be working at in daily life: to be a person of more self-forgetfulness and self-giving love. Sometimes this involves active works of charity – *see the corporeal works of mercy and giving more of our money to good Catholic charities*; but sometimes it involves more quiet unseen spiritual acts of charity - esp. as we get older and cannot do as many active works of charity and/or if we have frail health regardless of our age - so such things as *increased prayers for others, offering our sufferings and daily duties of our vocation with Jesus under the mantle of our Lady*, our spiritual Mother, and the one who adds her perfected merits and charity in Heaven to our imperfect offering because of our weakness and sins, and She makes it fully beautiful and holy to the glory of God and the good of souls both here on earth and in Purgatory, more than we can do just ourselves – (see **the Total Consecration to Jesus thru Mary** per St. Louis de Montfort – let me know after Easter if you are interested in looking into that Consecration). The supreme gift of the living more deeply the life of charity is not just us helping other souls, but that it deepens our Catholic Faith in the Lord and helps us to have a greater love for Our Lady and the Angels, esp. St. Michael and our own Guardian angel, and all the saints, who want to help us more than we can imagine join them some day in Heaven: the gift beyond imagining as St. Paul says, “*Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it dawned on the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him.*” Never forget that is the end goal of the Catholic life: Heaven, and why these next few days of the Triduum are so spiritually beautiful and important for everyone's soul. God bless you. ☩