

Homily: Holy Thursday 2023: Ex 12: 1-8; 11-14; Ps. 116; 1 Corth 11: 23-26; Jn 13: 1-15

### **“3 Holy Risks in Christ’s Charity for the Salvation of the Human Race”**

Charity is the very substance of the life of the Blessed Trinity: self-giving love. It is looking out for the good of the other, while making a gift of our self to and for the other. We are called to share in this gift of Godly love. True charity always looks for the good in the other and is willing to take **risks** to help the other. We are commemorating tonight three gifts of Jesus’ charity for the human race: **the Holy Eucharist, the sacramental Priesthood, and the gift of service** in relation to God and our fellow human beings.

1. **Jesus at the Last Supper, the first Mass, gave us the gift of His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist.** This is the most personal gift of the heart of Jesus, according to the saints, in which He chose the most humble way to remain with His followers until He returns at the end of time: see the Gospel of John chapter 6. What a gift it is! To receive the Lord of Life in Holy Communion is something we can NEVER take for granted or receive lightly. This is why both St. Paul (see *1 Corth chap 11: 27-32*) and the Church says **we must always examine ourselves prior to receiving the Holy Eucharist:** *to make sure we are not receiving the Lord unworthily, i.e., in the state of mortal sin.* The saints say again Jesus knew **the risk** of giving Himself to us literally in the Holy Eucharist, *that we humans could indeed receive Him haphazardly in a spirit of indifference, or without faith, or even in the state of alienation from Him, i.e., mortal sin;* but He was willing to take the risk out of charity, knowing the potential that some souls would receive Him with great love and be transformed in holiness – which all of us are capable of doing with the help of His grace. **Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of the Holy Eucharist** which unites us with you beyond our imagining - when we receive you with Faith and reverence and with a firm determination to turn away from all sin, big and small. Help us to grow in our love for you in the Holy Eucharist. May we show our love in adoration too.
2. **Jesus on the night of the Last Supper also gave His Church the gift of the ordained priesthood.** Again, He was taking a great **risk**, knowing that some of the men He called to be priests *could betray Him, e.g., Judas, or the bad priests in*

*these GJ reports, or never love Him with the total gift of their lives, being more focused on money, human honors and pleasure. But He also saw again in charity, out of the goodness of His heart, that some of His priests would be the instruments to bring many souls to Him and be icons of His generous love and goodness. That they could bring His Body and Blood to the faithful in the Eucharist, forgive even the most grievous of sins in Confession, give new Life to souls in Baptism, anoint those who are sick and dying, witness to the love of man and woman in the permanent covenant of marriage, preach His message of saving love and truth to a world full of evil, sadness and despair, and help in so many other manifold ways to bring people to His heart. Because of **charity**, He was willing to take **the risk** of entrusting the leadership of His Church to frail men who would act in His name. **Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of the ordained priesthood**, and please inspire many other men, especially in our Diocese, to say **Yes** to your loving Heart and give their life to You as priests of your New Covenant. May all of us pray daily for the priests and future priests of the Church.*

3. Finally, Jesus gives us the example of charity in action when he washes the feet of the Apostles, which is symbolic for all the acts of self-giving love we are called to do as His disciples. Again, the Lord when He created us human beings took **the risk** of giving us **freedom**, which can be used either for self-giving love or for selfishness. Those of you in the married life know that – it can either be rooted in generous love or lust for pleasure. As our Lady said at Fatima, many marriages are not pleasing to the Lord - but they can be. The Lord tonight sets the example for us of how we are to both think of others and give to others. The season of **Lent** hopefully taught us this in a deeper way: *all prayer, fasting and almsgiving are to lead to a greater life of charity in union with Christ.* This is seen both in a greater union with, the source of charity, the Blessed Trinity and in loving our neighbor better. The Lord knows it **is not easy** for us sinful human beings to do this, but through His example and by the grace He won for us by His *Passion, Death and Resurrection* we now have **the opportunity** to follow in His way of total self-giving love. Thank you, Jesus for showing us how to be truly charitable.