April 9, 2020

**Holy Thursday Homily by Father Mike**

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Last night the Hebrew community gathered in their homes to celebrate the Feast of Passover. The families surrounded their table and ate the traditional food and prayed the ritual prayers that united them as a people for thousands of years. Tonight we Christians recall Jesus’s last supper, His Passover meal, gathered with his disciples before His death. This celebration is the beginning of three days which mark the center of our Christian faith. Even though we have been celebrating these days for centuries it is very different for us today. Throughout many years Christians and Jews have been prohibited from celebrating these rituals due to persecution and in many parts of the world this is true today. For most of us today though, we have been confined to our homes for the good of others as well as for ourselves.

The three traditional hinges of Lent: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving have taken on new meanings. We have prayed more earnestly for the good and safety of others. We have fasted from receiving the Eucharist. We have given to those individuals and groups of people who need the basic necessities for protection and livelihood. In a real sense we are living out the command Jesus had given this night to His disciples.

Yes we hunger for the Body and Blood of the Lord. Yes we long to stand with those who have encouraged us in the faith, our parish family. Yes we are eager to lift our voices up in praise and song to our God.

What is the possible message of Jesus for us this year? Could it be true humility? When Jesus took off His robe and put a towel around his waist and knelt down to wash the disciples’ feet, he was humbling himself as a servant. He is giving us an example of service not just for our friends but also to those who may be our advisories to those we call enemies. But Jesus did not stop there. He then took ordinary bread and wine and transformed them into His Body and Blood. He humbled himself even more so that we might be able to partake of Him every day. And finally he did not stop even there. He took the weak in body and spirit, me and all other priests, and asked us to model Him. For the times we have failed we seek your pardon and ask you to pray for us so we may become his true disciples.

For He commanded us to serve you and to nourish you with the Bread of Eternal Life and the Cup of Salvation, to forgive sins in the name of Jesus, and to do all this in remembrance of Him.

When this disease has run its course, and it will, when we are able to go about our ordinary lives, how will we have changed? Will we remember the lessons of care and service; will we be humble and realize that it is the Lord who governs our lives? Will we be more faithful, more generous, more humble, more caring of our families and the planet that supports our lives.

There will be a time to gather together again and what a great celebration it will be! In Monday Morning prayer Week 2, Psalm 42 we have prayed:

*These things will I remember*

*as I pour out my soul:
 how I would lead the rejoicing crowd*

*into the House of God,
 amid cries of gladness and thanksgiving,
 the throng wild for joy.*

Let us pray that this day come soon.

Amen