

Holy Thursday

April 13, 2006

Ex 12:1-8, 11-14

Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18

I Cor 11:23-26

Jn 13:1-15

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There is a story about a man named Jim. Jim was in the Vietnam War. His worst fear was to die in battle. One day he was in the trenches when he was hit by a bullet. At first he couldn't believe that he had been hit. Then, he realized that he was bleeding and that he would die if he did not get immediate medical attention. He began to shout for help: Help! Help me! I've been shot and I'm bleeding a lot. All of a sudden, a man appeared and put Jim on his back. He carried Jim to the medical tent and arrived just in time. The nurses said to this man: "It's a good thing that you got him here in time. A few more minutes and he would have died from too much blood loss." Jim got better over time and he said to the man who carried him to the tent: "You saved my life. I hope that I can do the same for you one day."

As time went on, the war ended and Jim stayed in touch with the man who saved his life. Over the years this man became very ill and was in need of a major operation to save his life. The problem was that he did not have good medical insurance and he could not afford to have the surgery. Jim found out about this man's problem and he went to visit him. He said to him: "When we were in Vietnam, you saved my life and I have always wanted to repay you. Now I have my chance. I will pay whatever medical bills you will incur with your surgery." Jim did this for the man and the surgery went well. Jim saved his life.

Just as Jim remembered how he was saved by the man when he got shot in the Vietnam War, so too do we remember tonight what Jesus did tonight to save us from sin and death. We remember how Jesus instituted the sacrament of Eucharist on the night that He was betrayed. He took the bread and wine, blessed it, gave it to His disciples and said that this was His body and blood and to repeat this meal in remembrance of Him. He later dies for us so that we could have everlasting life with God in heaven.

He tells us what we need to do in order to remember Him too through His example. After sharing the meal with His disciples, He washed their feet as a servant to them. He says to them: "Just as I have washed your feet, so too must you wash each other's feet... What I have done, so you must do."

How can we do to each other what Jesus did for us? For Jim, he remembered how the man saved his life and so he helped him financially during his time of need. Jesus spent His whole ministry showing us how to love one another and to reach out to help their needs. We too are called to do the same with our own lives and talents. We are called to come to the table of the Lord to be nourished with His graces so that we can go out and minister to His people according to the gifts and talents that He has given to us. Some ways that this can be done is if I

have the gift of patience, then I am called to show others how to be more patient with people who don't do things as quickly as others would like them to. If I have a gift of seeing the goodness of God in the world around me, then I am called to help others to see the beauty of God in our everyday experiences. If I have the gift of a well-paying job, then I am called to share my resources with those who are financially struggling. Whatever my gifts are, I am called to share them with the people around me and to do it all for the love of God.

Sharing our God-given gifts and talents with those around us who need them is all at the heart of Eucharist. We are called to go out into the world and make the Kingdom of God a reality in whatever way we can. That's what it means to "Do this in memory of me." That's what Jim did as he reached out and helped the man who saved his life. That's what Jesus showed His apostles to do at the Last Supper. And that is what God is asking us to do with our gifts and talents and we come together this Holy Thursday to break bread together and to become servants of Jesus Christ so that we can do it all in memory of Him.