**MAUNDY THURSDAY HOMILY: Fr Abraham, Waterside parish**

**1st Reading Exodus 12/1-8,11-14 2nd Reading First Letter of St. Paul to Corinthians 11/23-26, Gospel John 13/1-15**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Today we celebrate the Lord’s Supper. On this day the church specially remembers what Jesus did and taught by his own example. The context is not a simple meal but Passover Meal. Jesus gives a new meaning to the Feast. It is a day in which we give attention to 3 things

* Jesus washes the feet of His disciples
* Institution of the Eucharist
* A New commandment of Love given.

What was it that Jesus wants to teach His disciples by washing their feet?

Jesus knew that His time was near and before He went to His Father wanted to give them a New Model of Life and Service to imitate. He chose the disciples, taught them but even on the last days, they were in a struggle to see who the Greatest among them was. Jesus must have been in a terrible shock and pain to realise that His disciples have not understood anything about His kingdom and its values. He had very little time left and had to teach them that the way to Glory is not through power and positions but SERVICE. So He wanted to teach something very powerfully that they will remember forever.

-Jesus recognises that His time has come to return to the Father and time is closing in.

- He loved those who were His own. Even though it was not appropriate for His stature to wash the feet of His disciples, His Love for them was much Greater.

- Jesus knew that Satan, His enemy will strike Him hard and before this ordeal happens had to strengthen His disciples.

Today’s Application for us is also the same and Lead us to SERVICE.

* That the Time has come and Time is shortened by each passing day
* We need to Love those who are our own and who are entrusted to us.
* That we recognise the enemy. He is ever ready to strike us down as he did to Christ. We ought to engage in SERVICE.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that we are disciples of Christ who washed the feet of His own disciples- we as Christians should never forget. This should be the ATTITUDE of a Christian when he/she engages himself or herself in SERVICE to the society. Last Supper is a day when Christ mixing few tears, may be, with the water with which He washed the feet of the one who was to betray Him, the one who was to disown Him. We need to find strength from this that we too may face the same in our service of the family and society.

The ATTITUDE is what we need to focus on this day to be a Christian. To forgo the “I” “EGO” to give place to the “OTHER” – how difficult it can be for many but is it not what we see in those numerous Health Workers who work day and night for the “other” even at the cost of their own inconvenience?

No one has greater love than this to lay down one’s own life for one’s friends (Jn.15/13), said Jesus and He taught them about Love and what He taught was actualised on this day by instituting the Eucharist. He commanded them to do it in remembrance of Him. Jesus wanted to be with His own and remain with them forever so to bring Him through the sacrifice that He established, instituted Eucharist and Priesthood. For a Catholic this is one of the Most Gracious day because on this day unlike the Old Testament term denoted “Passover”, He came to live forever with us in the Eucharist.

If anyone wants to be saved, come to the Eucharist because it is the Sacrament of Sacraments which washes all our trespasses. This is what 2nd Vatican Council taught.

“It is a symbol of Love, a Symbol of Unity, and a Covenant of Charity”.

Christ’s Body and Blood gives us Life Eternal. St. Lawrence Justinian says, “We cannot count the blessings that we receive through the Eucharist”. A sinner is reconciled with God-a just person becomes more just – sins uprooted – Virtues and worth increases, above all Satan’s plans are destroyed”.

The Saint of our times St.Padre Pio says,” I can at least imagine about a day when the Sun does not rise, but I cannot even in my imagination think of a day without Eucharist”.

St.John Mary Vianney says to people who does not understand the worth and value of the Eucharist that if we really understand what the Holy Eucharist is, then we will die of Joy.

We ought to approach in utmost reverence and holiness to this sacrament. At this time when we cannot physically participate in the Eucharist, we need to seriously give a thought how we approach it.

The command is to “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Lk.22/19).

Recently I came across a Eucharistic miracle that happened in 1348, in the town Alboraya- Almacera in Spain. A priest on his way to visit some sick people in order to bring them communion, slipped in the waters of a small river from the mule- back as he was crossing and overturned the ciborium with 3 consecrated hosts which were swept away. The priest was very sad and resigned himself to the loss, heard himself being called by some fishermen, asking him to come closer to the shore to see 3 fishes with discs in their mouth that appeared like Hosts. He was astonished by what he saw as three remarkable fish were there, almost completely out of the water, lifting the Hosts intact with their mouths, like little trophies. He fell to his knees, prayed as he had never prayed before in his entire life. The Hosts were immediately recovered and taken in procession to the church in which the entire village participated. There even exists a small church, with two fish sculpted on the door, built on the site of the miracle, and two paintings reproducing the entire event.

When we give due respect and adoration to the Eucharist along with nature, as even done by the fish, we receive abundant blessings of the one who has given His Body and Blood as Food and Drink. Take this and eat of it, this is my body and Take and Drink, this is my blood shed for many.

The commandment to Love should be an expression of our answer to God’s infinite love. We are invited to love from the depth of our heart. In this time of Kovid 19 we heard an incident of Father Josepe in Italy who offered his Ventilator to a young man and in turn embraces death. True Love is to serve others (1Peter 4/9-10). Jesus invites us to love as He loved (Mt.16/24). Do not be selfish (Rom.15/1-2). He (Jesus) gave us everything that he had (Phil.2/6-8).

Let us reflect on this day where Jesus left us the memorial of His Love that –

-Do we serve and love others as Jesus commanded?

- How do we approach the Eucharist?

May I request you all to pray for all the Priests that you know , as they celebrate their Priesthood, especially me and Fr.John.