

April 5, 2007  
Holy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

First Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-15

Celebrity chefs are our new societal icons. Whereas we had the steel and railroad tycoons in the 18-1900's and we had the dot-com wizards of the past decades, those that craft a meal and the environment in which it is consumed are the new 'talk of the town'. In Orlando, New York, Las Vegas, Hollywood, Singapore...the top chefs vie to invite guests into new and ever-more exciting dining experiences. A sumptuous meal is no longer gulped down on the way to the theater, the restaurant is now the destination and the drama is on the plate and in the service. An essential ingredient of the Jewish Passover is the consumption of a ritual meal, a meal eaten hurriedly and in preparation for flight. Within the contours of the Passover Meal is the birth of our Eucharist: bread broken and shared becomes the eternal flesh of Jesus, wine poured and passed becomes the blood of Christ soon to be shed on the cross and by which we will avoid the angel of death as the doorposts of our hearts are dabbed with it. Feet are washed in humble service, prophetic farewells are exchanged with faithful assertions and realistic counterings. Tonight, while we will consume transformed bread and wine, the fullness of the meal is within the story. Images of intimacy, tenderness, abandonment, betrayal, and resignation all combine like the elusive flavorings of a fine dish. Tonight's offerings are but the first courses of a meal that continues tomorrow and concludes on Saturday evening. Tonight we are given nourishment for the loss and sadness of tomorrow. The grief of tomorrow will ferment throughout the waiting of Saturday until at last the 'piece de resistance' is presented at the Vigil and on Easter morning. So, settle in and partake of the meal. Allow yourself to recall your own passages from fear to hope. Remember how you have been fed throughout your journey...and eat lavishly of what is presented tonight...and tomorrow and finally Saturday/Sunday. This is the meal, the food, that will give us hope in times of darkness, that will be our light in confusion, that will be our strength in weakness, that will be our resurrection in the midst of death. Tonight, tomorrow, Saturday/Sunday, eat like your life depends upon it.

Thank you for joining with us here for our communal entry into the Triduum, a single liturgy that encompasses three days. What we begin tonight reaches its conclusion on Saturday at the Vigil. You are encouraged to return tomorrow (Friday) at 7:00 p.m. for the Passion and Reverencing of the Cross. You are of course welcome to return on Saturday evening as the Paschal Flame is lit, as our Catechumens and Candidates die to their old lives and rise to fresh ones within our Catholic-Christian Community. This evening, the Blessed Sacrament is available for private adoration on the Altar of Repose in the lower Hall until midnight, feel free to linger or to come back and spend some time in private prayer. **You will note the large baskets of bread that are near the altar. While NOT consecrated, this blessed bread is available for you to take home and join what we do here in Church with what you do at your own personal Easter Meal.** Perhaps use it as part of your Easter Grace: praying that each person at your table have the strength to experience/endure the Cross so as to come to the resurrection and then pass the bread and have each person rip off a small piece and consume it, ending with a communal praying of the Lord's Prayer. Fed with bread blessed and broken, wine blessed and poured, remember, you are loved. FKB