

**Rev. Donato Infante III**  
**Holy Thursday 2018**

If we think back to the original paradise in the Bible, it was a Garden in which a man and a woman chose to do their will instead of doing the will of God. He walked among them as a friend, but they choose to say instead, "My will be done." Christ, on Holy Thursday, also chose a garden in which to pray, and we re-enact that tonight as we process to our altar set up as the altar of repose. There, despite knowing what horrors awaited him, he prayed, "Not my will, but thy will be done." Christ kept this spirit until the end, when he breathed his last.

But God did not want this sacrifice to be just one historical event among many in the plan of salvation. He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." As Saint Paul tells us, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes." This is why we sing with the Psalmist,

"How shall I make a return to the LORD  
for all the good he has done for me?  
The cup of salvation I will take up,  
and I will call upon the name of the LORD."

Every Sunday, in fact every day, we celebrate what is known as the Eucharist: a word, which means thanksgiving. It is the ultimate act of gratitude for all God has done for us. Furthermore, when received with true charity in our hearts, selfless love of God and others, we become one with Christ.

"Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ."

I have spoken about the Trinity window here before, and at night it is hard to see, but I do want to draw your attention to it once again because it is one of the best depictions of the Trinity I have ever seen in a parish church. Our window depicts the three members of the Trinity. In the center of them, we see both the Irish triquetra, signifying that the members overflow into each other, that they are not just accidentally but one really and truly substantially one, and we see also a space between them. That space is for us, to once again be friends with God, and be elevated to a new state beyond what was offered to Adam and Eve. We are to be holy, which means we are to be like God, to share his very nature, Scripture tells us, because we are to be *in* Christ. We are not to be some fourth person of the Trinity nor some fifteen millionth person in history of the Trinity, but *in Christ*. This is why at the high point of the Mass, we do not say that we alone are giving honor and praise to God. We sing, "Through HIM, with HIM, and in HIM, O God, Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, forever and ever." We do it as united to Christ, as in Christ.

We are grafted on to Christ in baptism. When we baptize, we say that we baptize someone "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This is not like the president sent the ambassador in his name, but we are baptized "into" that name. We are joined to God, and sustained as united to Christ in the sacrament we celebrate tonight, the Sacrament of Charity, the Eucharist. This sacrament is tied to service, and it moves us forward to do good to others outside the Church:

Christ then exhorted the ones to whom he gave this gift, "If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

Faith does not end when we walk out this door. At the same time, our Holy Father Pope Francis has said again and again that we cannot be just one more non-government agency doing charitable work. We practice true charity, which is loving with the love of God. Often, we think that prayer or the contemplative side of Christianity is just for monks and nuns. We have work to do: there are the elderly to visit and the hungry to feed and the homeless to shelter. All important tasks, but without *this*, we offer them too little. This is why Saint Teresa of Calcutta insisted that her sisters spend time praying every day in Eucharistic adoration. There was always to be more work to be done. Only by being united to Christ could they do any of it well.

Because most religions in our nation are not liturgical in the way we are, their beliefs sometimes affect the way we think. Sometimes it feels like what we do here, worship, is a distraction. "Sure, give me a good sermon on the moral life, so that I know what I am doing when I go back to the real world." Yet our homilies are not always on morals because they serve to draw us into the Mysteries. My dear friends in Christ, liturgy *is* the real world. The rest of life is still becoming the Kingdom. It is here we touch the unfathomable depths of God, which if done well, overflows into us in such a way that we are transformed and therefore so is the world. Communion is not something that ends when we walk out the door. The liturgy transforms us to be people of communion. This is why the Second Vatican Council says that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. It all flows from it and flows back to it.

One great saint who experienced this perpetual union with the Trinity was Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity. "*A praise of glory is a soul that lives in God...a soul of silence that remains like a lyre under the mysterious touch of the Holy Spirit...that gazes on God in faith and simplicity...one who is always giving thanks.*" Because she was in constant union with God, she radiated holiness and over.

My dear friends in Christ, the Church exists for *worship*, which is what everything was for Adam and Eve when they were in friendship with God. Christ has given us a gift, the Eucharist, through which we have union with Christ, and our other good deeds become worship, too. This is a great gift; therefore, we must truly come to appreciate and understand what it is we do here and how it changes everything, that we might say with the Psalmist once more...

"How shall I make a return to the LORD  
for all the good he has done for me?  
The cup of salvation I will take up,  
and I will call upon the name of the LORD."