

Thursday, April 9th, 2020 - Holy Thursday or Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. The Easter Triduum has begun today and lasts through Easter Sunday. It consists of one liturgy lasting three days. Today, Holy Thursday, we participate in the Last Supper. During this part of the liturgy, we are reminded that this is when Jesus instituted the Sacraments of Holy Orders and the Eucharist. Two powerful sacraments that are so important in each of our lives. The threat of the Coronavirus has caused bishops throughout the world to suspend public Masses and to have church buildings remain locked. The people are deprived of the Source and Summit of our faith. However, we have a unique opportunity to reflect upon aspects of these sacraments in maybe a new way during this time. Many times, in life when there are things that we have regular access to, we can take them for granted. But in the situation of the world today, we are faced with not having the access to Mass and the Eucharist. And in some cases, individuals are not being able to have access to a priest for confession, anointing of the sick, or Holy Communion.

These days of uncertainty and adjustments have caused anxiety, frustration, and even some anger in many. I share many of those same emotions and concerns. However, there is still an importance of respect that is needed whenever we are dealing with another human being. We are never allowed to take out our frustration or anger on another person. If/when we do, there normally is sin that goes along with it, and sometimes it can even be serious sin. I want to warn all to be aware of this aspect.

When God called me to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, I realized my unworthiness, and I tried to run from or even look for reasons to avoid it. But God, if He wants something, is persistent. Eventually I had to surrender to what God wanted and not what I wanted. After eight years of education and formation to be a priest, I was ordained. It is not my priesthood, but I share in the ministerial Priesthood of Jesus Christ. God has blessed me with many talents, but I also have an endless amount of flaws, too.

Each time I have been appointed as the pastor to a new community, I am reminded that my first responsibility to the new community is to pray for the flock entrusted to my care. This I have always tried to do to the best of my ability. What has always been a passion of mine as a priest is the salvation of souls. For in the end, that is all that matters. So, with that in mind, I want to share that I love each and every one of you that is entrusted to my care as your pastor. To love each of you means, I will the highest good for you. The highest good is Heaven, and I am willing to do all I can to help you get there. However, I have my own soul to save as well. As the pastor, or shepherd, I need to try to provide for and protect the flock from harmful wolves that would seek to destroy the flock.

Satan can be very deceptive in his tactics, as ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing. He needs to be pointed out and exposed. The devil and all demons hate Lent, Holy Week, and especially the Easter Triduum. Why? Because many people choose to correct their lives and want to grow closer to God. Many choose to go to confession, especially during Holy Week. And the Easter Triduum is when the devil, who thought that he had triumphed over Christ, was actually defeated when Christ died on the Cross. It is this time when the devil and demons are very active in the lives of people to try to get them to fall.

In the life of the Church, there have been many men and women that God has raised up to call people back to the right path. To point out their straying ways. To encourage them to turn back to the Lord, repent, and believe in the gospel. St. Catherine of Siena was a great woman in her day. St. Catherine was courageous and bold, but also humble and had a great fear of the Lord. She had an encounter with God and a conversation about a topic that was very dear to her heart that she recorded in her writings of *The Dialogue*. This was God speaking to St. Catherine!

There are two articles that I want to strongly encourage everyone to read and take to heart. The first is entitled, "**The Danger of Criticizing Bishops and Priests**" by **Reverend Thomas G. Morrow**. The second is, "**St. Catherine of Siena and the Reverence Due to Priests**" by **Maura Roan McKeegan**. There is a lot in the articles, so feel free to break them down and read a little at a time. The links to both articles are below. After reading both of them, I strongly encourage everyone to reflect upon the content, asking yourself the question, "Where do I stand in relation to this topic?"

<http://ccgaction.org/respectpriestsandbishops3>

<https://catholicexchange.com/st-catherine-siena-reverence-due-priests>

Holy Thursday, the beginning of the Easter Triduum, has always been a special celebration as an ordained priest. For it is on this night when Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of Holy Orders, and that men began to share in the ministerial Priesthood of Jesus Christ. I pray that each and every one of us will have a greater respect and reverence for the office of the Holy Priesthood of Jesus Christ and to those that God Himself has called to this Sacred task. Please pray for all bishops and priests to become more closely united to Jesus Christ the High Priest. May your Holy Thursday be blessed in a way that you have never experienced before.

In Christ,

Fr. Dan