

## **Homily for Holy Thursday**

This evening at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, we commemorate that very first Mass, celebrated during the course of the Last Supper, when Jesus took simple bread and commonplace wine, and transubstantiated them into His very Sacred Body and Precious Blood. This was the last and greatest of Jesus' miracles. But it reminds us of the many other miracles He performed during the course of the three years of His earthly ministry. For example, as recorded in John 2, we remember the very first miracle Jesus performed. At the intercession of His mother, the Virgin Mary, at the wedding of Cana, He took six huge stone jars filled with water and transformed it into good wine to be enjoyed by the wedding guests. And then, on another occasion, as recorded in John 6, Jesus fed thousands of people by taking a couple fish and a few loaves of bread and multiplying them to super-abundance.

My friends, it is by no accident that Jesus began with these, among the first of His public miracles. For if Jesus can plentifully multiply loaves of bread and turn water into wine, can He not turn that wine into His Precious Blood and that bread into His Sacred Body? There is NO doubt.

The thing is, though, that the miracles do not stop here. For Jesus actually desires to continue to work His miracles in and through us. As He says in the very next chapter after that which our Gospel is taken from this evening: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do

greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.” Then, through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus gives us, we are enabled to live heroic and saintly lives for the benefit of others – so that others, from our spouses and our families to our co-workers, classmates, and even strangers and enemies – may know the love of God for them!

And how will that love be known? Well, certainly by the preaching of the Gospel. As St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, “How can others believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach?”

But as powerful as the words of Scripture are, and as inspiring as our words or preaching from the pulpit can be, actually *living* the Good News is a much more powerful witness. Pope Paul VI back in 1975 stated: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” In other words, our talk must be backed up by our walk! And this is precisely why John, in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of his Gospel, which we heard from this evening, connects the Last Supper with the Washing of the Feet. Jesus gives His Disciples His Body and His Blood – He says He is doing this. But, then He shows them what it means to have the Son of God living within you – it means a life of humble, loving service.

My friends, Jesus came not to be served, but to serve. And so, if we are to call ourselves Christians, not to mention, actually receive our Lord within our very bodies and souls in Holy Communion, then we must let Jesus live through us! And where shall we start? I suggest to you not half-way across the world. Not even in our local communities, at least at first. But rather in our families. Loving service must begin at home – with those who know us. Family members know our highlights and our lowlights, our strengths and our weaknesses, our baggage and our moments of joy. This is precisely where we are to start. And for many families this would truly be a miracle in and of itself – to treat one another as well as they treat their friends, or as nicely as they talk to their religious leaders, or as thoughtfully as they even perform random acts of kindness for strangers! Everyday miracles even!

But where do we get the power and the strength to do this? Not from ourselves, that's for sure – but from Jesus, in particular through the holy Eucharist. In this case we are what we eat, and we are becoming who we consume. If you rely on your own strength, “washing the feet” of your family members is just too humiliating, distressing, perhaps even disgusting. But by receiving Jesus within you, and by allowing His Holy Spirit to transform you, we can truly perform everyday miracles like these, because we believe in Jesus, who has gone to the Father. God bless you.