

“Do this in memory of me.”: Eucharist-The Real presence.

There is no greater richness on earth than “real presence”. I know the story of a woman, whose husband met with an accident the day after wedding, and got paralyzed from hip to toe. Doctors told her that marital-sexual life will be impossible for him; her family and friends, and finally her husband himself insisted her for another marriage. But she did not consent, instead she took care of him amazingly. After 52 years of marriage, when he dies, that 72-year-old woman is weeping miserably during burial, making all those present, cry: saying; *I don't have any more **his presence** here on earth.* The presence of those who love us is so strong that only those who really love will understand it. Jesus knew this very well.

Today, the church commemorates three events: the Institution of the *M. Holy Eucharist*, of *ministerial priesthood* and the giving of the *new commandment-of love*. These can only be understood as an intensely personal event at the very *end day of Jesus' life*, as manifestation of his endless love and mercy for humanity.

The infidelities of his disciples did not prevent Jesus from *loving them till the end*. They often disputed over who would be the greatest among them. They were fighting between themselves regarding, who would wash Jesus' feet, as they were preparing the Supper. After all, it was the task of the slave to wash the feet of the master, and no one would dare to do it. Jesus takes them by surprise, kneels and washes their feet. Jesus' washing does not depend on whether they 'deserve' it or not, for Jesus washed even the feet of Judas, the betrayer.

Jesus transformed the lives of his disciples, by reaching out to them in humble service. He is teaching us the great lesson: *“unless you are able to bend till the feet of your neighbour, you won't be able to understand the mystery of the Holy Eucharist”*. He knows our infidelities also, as he knew those of his disciples. His deeply personal gesture becomes the foundation of our own relationship

with Christ. Friends, the washing of feet is nothing but a symbol of *Jesus, sanctifying the souls of his disciples, by washing away their sins with his blood on the cross, on the next day-Friday.*

And why did Jesus institute the Eucharist? To perpetuate his REAL PRESENCE. “*Do this in remembrance of me!*” This was his mandate to the Apostles, by commissioning them as Priests, ministers of the Holy Eucharist. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross is the *only sacrifice* of shedding blood, offered once and for ever for the deliverance of all. This sacrifice of blood can never be repeated. But the same sacrifice, without shedding blood, is repeated each time, through the celebration of the Eucharist -the S&S of Christian Life.

(Jesus instituted the sacrament of Eucharist, “on the night he was betrayed”: the time when his love and trust were betrayed by those close to him; his own disciple. Despite that, he continues to give himself away amidst betrayal & abandonment.)

After washing their feet, Jesus gave them the commandment of Love. *These two commands are strictly interrelated*, as they point to the *very essence of Christian identity*. It’s thorough the Holy Euch., -*the source and summit* of our faith that the **people of God become a community of love**. Without Eucharist, there is no life for the Church. Holy Eucharist is *Jesus’ way of embracing us*, of holding us close to his heart, of telling us how dearly we are loved.

Friends, if you ever knew the true meaning, value and greatness of the Holy Eucharist, you would ever miss a Sunday mass. Let’s not forget that we are part and parcel of his body, - the Church.

Eucharist is the greatest sign, greatest miracle Jesus ever did.

Therefore, the greatest act that the church can perform is the celebration of the holy Eucharist. Our Christian community is established this day at cenacle, in the upper room, upon the new commandment of love, the covenant sealed by Jesus’ blood on the cross. It is that love that strengthens us and keep us united, to spread the spark of love to the broken world around us. As we take refuge in the loving warmth of God’s embrace in the Holy Eucharist, let us bring that embrace to today’s suffering world. Amen
