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Mass of the Lord's Supper

Date: Thursday, April 17, 2025 | **Season:** Sacred Paschal Triduum | **Year:** C
First Reading: Exodus 12:1–8, 11–14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 116:12–13, 15–16c, 17–18 | **Response:** 1 Corinthians 10:16
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23–26
Gospel Acclamation: John 13:34
Gospel Reading: John 13:1–15
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

The room is quiet, except for the sound of water being poured into a basin. It's a small sound, almost fragile—but it carries across the centuries. From the Exodus in Egypt to the upper room in Jerusalem, and now, to this very church tonight.

This evening we begin the Sacred Triduum, the holiest days of the Christian year. It is a single liturgy that unfolds across three nights: from table, to cross, to empty tomb. And tonight, we are not spectators. We are participants in a mystery of love that stoops to serve.

Our first reading takes us back to the very first Passover: "This day shall be a memorial feast for you." A lamb is chosen. Bread is baked in haste. The people eat, dressed to leave, ready to walk out of slavery and into freedom. This was not just a meal—it was the night that shaped a people. And every year since, the Jewish people remember it as if they themselves had been brought out of Egypt.

And then St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, gives us the Christian Passover: "This is my body, that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Jesus doesn't offer a lamb. He is the Lamb. In place of the blood on the doorpost, His blood is poured out for the world. In place of hurried unleavened bread, He gives His own flesh, broken for our salvation. Every time we gather for the Eucharist, it is this night we recall—not just in memory, but in real, living presence.

But St. John's Gospel shows us something even more shocking. There is no mention of bread or wine. Instead, Jesus rises from supper, takes off His outer robe, ties a towel around His waist—and begins to wash feet. One by one. Dusty, calloused, undeserving feet. He even washes Judas'.

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The One who is “Teacher and Lord” becomes the servant.
The One who feeds the world kneels with a basin.
The One who is God stoops—because that is what love does.

“Do you realize what I have done for you?” Jesus asks. That question wasn’t only for the Twelve. It is for us.

And so tonight, the Church does two things in response.
First: we celebrate the gift of the Eucharist—Christ’s Body and Blood, given not as a symbol but as His very self.
Second: we imitate His example of humble service, not only through the ritual of the footwashing, but in lives poured out for others.

Now, let’s be clear: not everyone here will have their feet washed tonight. But everyone is called to ask:

- Whose feet am I being asked to kneel before in my life?
- Where is the basin in my daily routine—in my family, my community, my workplace, my parish?

Here in Zambia, where the gap between rich and poor is still deep, what does Holy Thursday look like?

- It might look like ensuring each child has the chance to learn.
- It might sound like apologising to someone you’ve hurt—and meaning it.
- It might feel like working behind the scenes to serve others when no one is watching.

In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius invites us not only to admire Christ, but to follow Him—to imagine Him kneeling before us, and to ask, can I do the same? That’s the invitation tonight: to contemplate Christ in His humility, and to find the courage to love as He loved.

Because Holy Thursday is not just about remembering the Last Supper. It’s about continuing it.
When we receive the Eucharist, we become what we receive: the Body of Christ—broken, blessed, and given for the life of the world.

So let me offer you three questions, as we enter into this great Paschal journey:

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- Where is Christ calling you to kneel—not in ritual, but in real life?
- How will the Eucharist you receive shape the way you forgive, serve, and love?
- What does it mean for you to say: “This is my body, given for you”?

The Mass tonight will not end with a dismissal. There is no final blessing. Why? Because this liturgy flows into Good Friday, and from there into the silence of the tomb, and on to Easter morning.

Let us walk this path with Him—from table, to cross, to glory. Let us serve as He served. Let us love as He first loved us.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today’s readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.