

Holy Thursday, 2019

1. *Bongani inkosi ngob' ilungile....*
2. *You are a priest forever in the line of Melchizedeck*
3. *Ngilinika umlayo omutsha wokuba lithandane lonke*

As Catholics there are two things that we underline; a) What Jesus did. b) What Jesus commanded us to do.

Today we celebrate **3** things that Jesus Christ did and commanded us to do i). Eucharist, ii). Priesthood and iii). Love one another.

The liturgy of the word narrates the Passover meal in Egypt, Paul's story of the last supper and the story of Jesus washing his disciple's feet.

Today we celebrate the three foundational stands and pillars of the Church; the institution of the Eucharist (a call to community), the institution of the Priesthood (a call to service), and the commandment of Christ for brotherly and sisterly love (a call to Love).

All three are interconnected, - love penetrates through the community and service. In his Encyclical *Ecclesiae De Eucharistia*, On the Eucharist, St John Paul II says; "There is no Priesthood without the Eucharist; and there is no Eucharist without the priesthood...Without Priests, there can be no Eucharist, and the Church community without the Eucharist is sorely lacking."

What would the Church be without the Eucharist? What would the Church be without Priests? O POOR CHURCH - No Eucharist!!! No Priesthood!!! No Love!!! The cure of Ars tells us "Leave the people without the priest and in no time they will be worshipping idols".

A call to communion and community – St Thomas Aquinas calls us to imitate the Host, the Bread of Life; The smallness of the Host teaches us humility, its roundness teaches us perfect obedience, its whiteness challenges us to be pure, the absence of yeast benevolence, its cooking patience and charity

In receiving communion we receive what has become the Body of Christ and become what we receive, the living Body of Christ.

A call to service –

Priesthood is a sacrament of service. Timothy Cardinal Dolan, defines Catholic priesthood in this way: “The Priesthood is a call, not a career; a redefinition of self, not just a new ministry; a way of life, not a job; a state of being, not just a function; a permanent, lifelong commitment, not a temporary style of service; an identity, not just a role. We are priests; yes the doing, the ministry is mighty important, but it flows from the being; we can act like priests, minister as priests, function as priests serve as priests, preach as priests, because first and foremost we are priests! Being before act!!!”

Pope Benedict XVI calls priests to service in three functions of Mediator – call to be bridges not barriers; Martyr – call to die to self and Missionary – call to an exodus, going out of our comfort zone. Like this candle we should sweat, cry and burn out in service of our brothers and sisters. Like a piece of soap that has been used up, we are used up for the good of others. At consecration, the Priest utters the words; Take and eat...Take and Drink... we die daily, we model our lives to that of Jesus who offered himself wholly for his flock.

John Chrysostom says the Jesus who says “This is my Body” is the same Jesus who says “I was hungry – worship and action.” Fulton Sheen reminds us that it is the Eucharistic Lord who leads us into action and service.

A call to Love – We should wash other people’s feet, not dirty them. We should help others have a nice smell, rather than smearing bad smell on them. They will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. This is a Christian key/passport/permit, a Christian ID and GPS, a Christian mark and sign - in the evening of our lives we shall be judged by love.

No Eucharist – No Priesthood – No Love

Eucharist – Priesthood – Love