

Notes from the Liturgist...

...REMAIN IN MY LOVE

“Remain in my love.” These are the beautiful words of Jesus that He spoke to his disciples during his last days with them before going back to the Heavenly Father. These were very precious words that he planted in their hearts and minds before his Ascension to the Heavenly Kingdom. (actually, this Gospel is suffused in the Gospel of the Institution of the Eucharist, Maundy Thursday)

Jesus’ message to his disciples is riddled with the word “love.” It is spoken many times in the gospel this weekend. He speaks to his disciples about abiding in love. Last weekend’s gospel message presented the idea of using the image of the branches attached to the vine. The vine is rich in symbolism, especially for the Jews, because Israel is identified in the Old Testament to be the vine especially chosen and cared for by God (Is. 5:1-2).

Jesus now identifies himself as the true Vine, and his disciples can remain attached to him by faithfully obeying his commandments. Jesus receives nourishment from the Father’s love, and it is the same love that Jesus communicates to his own disciples.

“Remain in my love.” Love is not loving unless it remains unless it endures. This “remaining” of the Father in the Son and the Son “remaining” in the Father, thus divine. While worldly “remaining” means “we are friends as long as I get something from you” or “I’ll stick with you as long as you promote me,” the divine “remaining” in Jesus is love that does not threaten nor strangle the beloved, a free-ing love that is unconditional and giving. I believe that this “remaining” is the strength of the pilgrim Christian deployed in a world where true love is elusive. It is a love that endures until the cross and even beyond time and space.

There are many signs that God imprinted his unconditional love for us. Let me share with you this weekend the two great signs that Jesus really marked in our heart, mind, body, and soul so that his love will remain with us forever.

First: The Institution of the Holy Eucharist. On the night of Holy Thursday, we commemorate the Institution of the Holy Eucharist. Jesus showed to us his love. He did the breaking of the bread and feed his disciples and said: “do this in remembrance of me”. What a beautiful gift that Jesus marked in our hearts. He taught his disciples so that his love will remain in them and humanity. Until now we are remembering his act of love. The priest celebrates the Holy Eucharist as a sign of remembering and a sign of our salvation.

This weekend, some of our kids here in our parish will be receiving the Holy Eucharist for the first time. They are very eager, excited and happy to receive Jesus in the form of the Eucharist. I hope that eagerness, excitement, and happiness are still with us until especially when we receive Jesus in the form of the Eucharist.

Second: The Cross. This is a very significant image of our humanity, especially for us Christians. Through His Cross, we are loved and saved. We need the crucifix visible in our lives, in our homes, in our church, in our community as a reminder of his love. Thus, through his crucified body humanity is saved.