**HOLY THURSDAY HOMILY Peter W. Daino APRIL 18, 2019 All Saints Parish, Syr. NY**

Holy Thursday is the prelude to Good Friday and Easter Sunday, but it is also the Hinge, at least for we Catholics because of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

There are two reflections I want to share this evening. First, how Holy Thursday is hinged to Good Friday, and then how Holy Thursday is hinged to Easter Sunday.

HOW HOLY THURSDAY IS HINGED TO GOOD FRIDAY

In the apocryphal Acts of John, at the conclusion of the Last Supper, Jesus says to his friends, “Let us Dance!” And they all hold hands in a circle, and as they circle around him, Jesus sings: “Glory be to Thee Father!”

To which the dancers circling around Jesus, responds: ‘Amen!”

“Glory be to Thee, Word!”

And again the friends say, “Amen!”

“I would be born and I would bear!”

The friends say, “Amen!”

“I would eat and I would be eaten!”

The friends say, “Amen!”

“You that dance, see what I do, for yours is this passion, this human passion, which I am about to suffer!”

The friends say, “Amen!”

“I would flee and I would stay!”

The friends say, “Amen!”

“I would be united and I would unite!”

The friends say, “Amen!”

“A door am I to you who knock on me; a way am I to you a wayfarer.”

And when the dance is ended, Jesus walks out to the garden to be taken and crucified.

Reflecting on these verses, Joseph Campbell, the mythologist, says: “When you go to your death that way, God-like, knowing your origin and your destiny, you are entering eternal life. So what is there to be sad about? Let us make it magnificent – as it is. Let us celebrate it.”

Even more so, we as believers, join with Jesus this evening, join his dance, join his celebration of this freedom we have: to give of ourselves, to love, to freely love.

You know when God created the world, God said: “Let it Be!” and that was all that was needed to create the earth, the sun, the moon, even for creating fish, and birds and other animals.

But when it comes to Love, Justice, or what we might call Virtues, God’s “Let it be!” does not work, for these depend on a gift God has only given to human beings, which in fact makes them human beings, and that is our Freedom!

What’s marvelous about the passage I have just read is that on the night before his death, Jesus teaches his friends to celebrate Good Friday, to Dance on the Way to the Cross, that’s not the usual way we do the Stations.

The point I am making is that God created this beautiful universe by saying LET IT BE, but there is one thing God could not create that way, and that thing is LOVE. Which is of course the MOST BEAUTIFUL thing in the universe. Only we human beings, using the gift of Freedom, God gave us, which makes us like God, only using this divine part of our human nature, can LOVE come to be and exist.

That is why Jesus teaches us to celebrate this freedom we have to love, why we are here practicing this freedom in the Holy Sacrifice of Mass.

Love is what makes us most like God and it is what God wants us to enjoy, but the paradox is that God had to risk this most beautiful part of the universe, that it might not even happen, God had to risk the whole creation going wrong, by giving freedom to us, because God wanted love to crown this creation. And as a Catholic I understand the Mass to be that crown, which crowns the whole creation.

HOW HOLY THURSDAY IS HINGED TO EASTER

People say you become what you eat. Sometimes when we eat bad food we think I am eating my way to an early death.

At Mass we are eating our way to eternal life.

Bishop N.T. Wright in “Surprised by Hope,” explains:

“What happens in the Eucharist is that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our future is brought sharply into play. We break this bread to share in the body of Christ; we do it in remembrance of him; we become for a moment the disciples sitting around the table at the Last Supper. Yet if we stop there we’ve only said the half of it. To make any headway in understanding the Eucharist, we must see it as the arrival of God’s future in the present, not just the extension of God’s past (or Jesus’s past) into our present. We do not simply remember a long-since dead Jesus; we celebrate the presence of ***the living Lord.*** And he lives through his resurrection, precisely as the one who has gone on ahead ***into the new creation,*** the transformed new world, as the one who is himself its prototype. The Jesus who gives himself to us as food and drink is himself the beginning of God’s new world. At communion we are like the children of Israel in the wilderness, tasting fruit plucked from the promised land. It is the future coming to meet us in the present.”

When I was in Malawi, the new creation I experienced in the Eucharist is Malawi with no AIDS, no suffering, and no death. When I swallowed the host I imagined that I was swallowing *future Africa, and indeed* ***future creation in its entirety.***

Jesus gave us the gift of his resurrection, on the eve of his death. The Eucharist is both the sacrificial love of Christ, and his victory over death. When we receive the Eucharist we are “eating” the resurrection.

Mass by Mass we eat our way into God’s new world. Mass by Mass our appetite for the future increases, and radical hopes stir in our hearts. Eating the resurrection increases our desire for ***a new way of being.***

Mass by Mass we eat our way to eternal life; to the fullness of life.

Amen!