

**CATHOLIC PARISH
OF THE DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**

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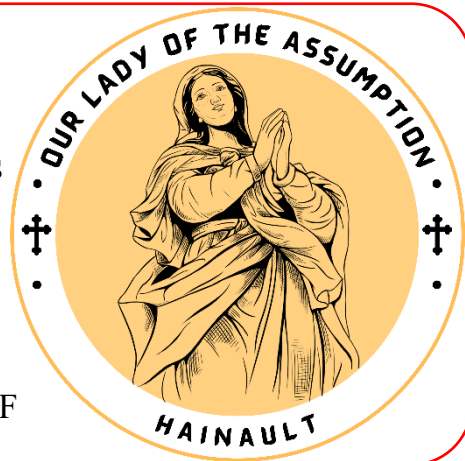
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MAUNDY THURSDAY – MASS OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Parish Mass Book – Readings – pgs. **199-203**

Hymn Book numbers for Mass

187 – The Servant King

664 – Spirit of God in the clear running water

678 – Take our bread, we ask you

42 – An upper room did our Lord prepare

499 – My God loves me

681 – Tantum ergo Sacramentum

Dear brothers and sisters,

When Jesus says, “Do this in memory of me!” clearly, he means us to understand what “This” was and is. What exactly had he in mind through the symbols of the broken bread and the shared cup of wine? We need to get behind the formal Catechism answer about the “holy sacrifice of the Mass,” and think anew about the meaning of that paschal meal. The Last Supper was celebrated in the context of the Jewish Passover meal and tonight’s first reading explains the meaning of this feast. In words and symbols, it recalled the greatest saving act of God in the Old Testament, the exodus from Egypt, setting God’s people free from slavery. It opens us up to the idea that God enters our lives to save us and set us free from whatever oppresses us. So “opened up,” we are prepared for the good news that the definitive saving work of God is done in and by Jesus Christ.

We reflect on what St John calls the “hour” of Jesus, the high point of his saving work, the new exodus, his passing from this world to the Father through which he brought into being a new relationship between God and us human beings. Sharing in this new exodus is our ultimate liberation, freeing us from enslavement to material things and petty self-interest and setting us free to love generously, the very purpose for which we were originally created in the image of God. Through his love-without-limit, in his own utterly unselfish heart, Jesus overcame all human selfishness and with it, human sin. Precisely this love, which the Father wants us all to have and to share, is the very heart of Jesus’ exodus. It is just this self-giving kind of love which Jesus wants to be kept alive among us. With his disciples in the Last Supper, he anticipated his death for us on the cross, giving himself in the sacramental symbols of bread and wine. From then on, the celebration of our Eucharist is the living memorial through which we are joined to Our Lord’s saving act of love. It is our way to share in the new exodus, to be freed from the isolation of self-concern so that we become fully human as God wants us to be.

St John implies that we are united with Jesus by letting him wash our feet, accepting his great act of loving service. Having accepted the gift, we must embrace it as a value to practice in our lives. What Jesus does for us in his Passion shows us how to live. In some real sense, we must live like Jesus, “for” God and others. There is a close link between Jesus washing their feet and then their going on to wash the feet of others in the future. If the Eucharist is the place where the Lord washes our feet, daily life is the place where we can wash the feet of others. True Eucharist piety must lead to service of others. Jesus who broke the bread of the Eucharist also washed the feet of his disciples. We must follow his example both at the altar of the Eucharist and at the altar of life.

Amen!

After the celebration, the faithful are invited to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable length of time during the night. In our church we will have Adoration until 22:00.