

Holy Thursday 2018
03/29/18

Tonight we celebrate several things. We celebrate the beginnings of the priesthood. We celebrate the institution of the Eucharist. And we celebrate a start of a unique concept of servanthood. While not trying to minimize the importance of the first two, I do want to focus on the last one, because it was radical then and in a sad way, it is radical in many ways today. For instance, Frederich Buechner suggests we Christians are living under a delusion when it comes to what we believe and how we live our lives.

He says that if the world is sane, then Jesus is mad as a hatter and the Last Supper is the Mad Tea Party. The world says, “Mind your own business”, and Jesus says, “There is no such thing as your own business.” The world says, “Follow the wisest course and be a success”, and Jesus says, “Follow me and be crucified.” The world says, “Drive carefully – the life you save may be your own”, and Jesus says, “Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” The world says, “Law and order”, and Jesus says, “Love.” The world says, “Get”, and Jesus says, “Give.” Therefore, in terms of the world’s sanity, Jesus is crazy as a coot, and anybody who thinks he or she can follow him without being a little crazy too is laboring less under a cross than under a delusion.

Jesus says there is no such thing as our own business. Jesus says follow Him and be crucified. Jesus says love and Jesus says give. Certainly not what we hear from Madison Avenue. But then Jesus never had to deal with Madison Avenue. Are these ideas those of a lunatic or a savior? Are we really living under a delusion? I say no. I say we’re living according to a blueprint given us by God Himself.

Let me conclude with a Holy Thursday prayer by Fr. Paul Wharton. I've used it before but love the humility and simplicity it represents.

Dear Lord, I know you want to wash my feet. I know my fear, my resistance. I'm not clean. I'm embarrassed to admit to myself all the ways I am dishonest, self-indulgent, negligent, defensive, and failing in my relationship with you, with others – failing to love.

Wash me. Let me accept, embrace how your self-giving sets me free from my sin and offers to heal me. By your being broken and given, poured out and shared, make me whole. Let my heart be freed of its anxiety and fear, its anger and lust. Fill me with joy and peace, that I might give you praise.

Send me to wash, to forgive, to free, to nourish, to embrace and give life. By your grace, may the poor know that your mandate has touched my heart and the hearts of the community whose celebration of your love sustains me.

There are a number of foot-washing stations set up throughout the church. I invite you to go to one of the stations and wash the feet of a loved one, or wash the feet of a friend, or maybe even wash the feet of a stranger. And while there, maybe even allow yours to be the feet that are washed. No matter if you are young or old, man or woman, teen or grandparent, step out of your comfort zone and be a servant to someone, be Jesus to someone, be a friend to someone, love someone as you've never loved them before. And now let us begin our celebration of love.