

Theme: "I HAVE GIVEN YOU A MODEL TO FOLLOW, SO THAT AS I HAVE DONE FOR YOU, YOU SHOULD ALSO DO" – JOHN 13-15

With the celebration of Holy Thursday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper, we have begun the Holy Triduum which ends on Easter Sunday. Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, he was always an excellent role model for his disciples and those he encountered in his earthly ministry. On the evening of the Lord's Supper, for the last time, Jesus reminded his disciples and future disciples: "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." The three principal mysteries that we celebrate in this Mass, namely the institution of the Holy Eucharist, the institution of the Priestly order (Holy Orders), and the commandment of the Lord's concerning fraternal charity,



help us to understand and live the model Jesus left for us to follow. In other words, if we are at the service of Jesus and one another with total unconditional love, we are following his footsteps, a model to our community.

The Institution of the Holy Eucharist

In the second reading, St. Paul gives us what is known as the earliest written account of the Institution of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament. St. Paul's Lord's Supper narrative placed emphasis on Jesus' action of self-giving. Jesus expressed this in his words over the bread and the cup and his double command to repeat his own actions when we celebrate the Holy Eucharist. In celebrating the Jewish Passover with his disciples for the last time, Jesus gave this ancient memorial meal we heard in the first reading, a new meaning. Unlike the lamb that the ancient Jews used in the meal and the blood that was applied to their two doorposts, Jesus was the paschal lamb that saved us from sin and reconciled us with his heavenly Father. It is very important for us always to remember that the Eucharist is not only a sacrifice, our self-surrender to God, but also a sacrificial repast signifying our union with both God and our Christian brothers and sisters.

Priestly Order (Holy Orders)

On the night of the Lord's Supper, Christ gave his beloved Church a gift of Holy Orders (ministerial priesthood) so that the Holy Eucharist would continue to be celebrated. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: "The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ increasingly builds up and leads his Church" - #1547. Furthermore: "The ordained ministers exercise their service for the People of God by teaching (munus docendi), divine worship (munus liturgicum), and pastoral governance (munus regendi)- # 1592. When we both, the ordained ministers and non-ordained ministers, take part in the Eucharistic celebration, we're reminded, we all belong to the royal priesthood of Christ.

The Commandment of the Lord concerning fraternal Charity

During the Lord's Supper, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and told them again: "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." In the ancient culture, the act of washing someone's feet was done by a slave not his/her master. Washing of feet was a sign of hospitality. It was usually done by the master's slaves when welcoming dignitary to the house. For Jesus, the Divine Master, to wash his disciples' feet was a sign of humility and service. He wanted his disciples to know that he called them to serve and not to be served. The washing of their feet is also considered an allusion to the humiliating death of his crucifixion awaiting him on the Good Friday.

During this Mass of the Lord's Supper and also at our adoration of him in the Marist Hall, let us meditate on Jesus' self-giving and fraternal charity to us all. Let us pray for the grace to be good role models, not only to our family, but to those around us.

Amen.