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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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In the gospel according to John, just as Jesus was about to begin the Last Supper with his disciples, the Lord gives a morsel of bread dipped in bitter herbs to Judas Iscariot. Jesus knew that Judas was about to betray him. He did not hold him back or try to dissuade him. He looked at Judas with a broken heart and said, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” The gospel narratives goes on to say, “Judas took the morsel and left at once. And it was night.” These few concise words reveal how bleak and bitter was that moment. Judas went through the door. The darkness of night, the dark night of sin enveloped him.

Soon after Judas left the room, Jesus declared to his disciples, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” These words seem to defy the bleak circumstances of what had just transpired. Yet, they were for Jesus and they conveyed to us, the mysterious reality of God’s mercy that would overcome the darkness and bring to a brilliant luster the light of Christ.

We might easily presume that Jesus was speaking of his resurrection. No. The moment of glory was a clear and confident proclamation about his sorrowful crucifixion and agonizing death. “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” The glory of God’s mercy and the radiance of grace would come when he handed over his spirit and the blood and water flowed from his pierced side.

As the world struggles under the mortal grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, we may feel as if darkness has enveloped us, casting a bleak, bitter shadow over these most sacred days of the Holy Triduum. Jesus’ prophetic words to the disciples should echo in our hearts, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.”

Many of us longingly hunger to taste again the Holy Communion of the Eucharist. The suffering and sacrifices of these days are the manner of communion our crucified Lord offers to us so that we might come to know his glory, the glory of his mercy and the radiance of his grace. The wondrous charity poured out for our sins kindly commands us, “As I have done so you must do.” Through every Eucharist we share in the Lord’s suffering and death so as to share in his resurrection. In every Sacrifice of the Mass the Lord’s wounds heal us.

By a mysterious while marvelous paradox, the plaguing scourge of this pandemic keeping us from coming together in our churches for the Eucharist unites us now in suffering and sacrifice with the crucified Christ. The Lord Jesus urges us to see “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.”

Soon after the resurrection, the risen Lord walk quietly with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. After the horror of Calvary, they were leaving Jerusalem dejected. Their hopes had been disappointed. Jesus scolded them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” May the same risen Lord give us the clarity and conviction to see his glory even in the tribulations of these days and may our hearts burn within us with the light of Easter joy.