

Maundy Thursday 2020

Traditionally in the Roman Catholic Church, the morning of Maundy Thursday is a time used to celebrate the gift of the priesthood.

Thus those ordained gather generally in a Cathedral, renew vows, and generally affirm the vocation they have been called to.

This year such a gathering is not possible.

Yet strangely this year has perhaps called upon those ordained to affirm the sacramental roles they fulfil with ever deepening sincerity.

There can be no greater servant of the community than the priest who believes in the role that is physically, emotionally and spiritually expressed in the sacramental life lived.

On the same night as the Last Supper Christ washed the feet of the Apostles.

There is no real distinction in Roman Catholic faith between the Spiritual and the Physical. Between the Holy and the Practical.

Christ was incarnate, fully God and fully human

Thus in these last few weeks when I delivered food from the food bank that was a physical and spiritual act.

When I tried to arrange for St Edwards parish hall to be safely painted that was a physical and spiritual act

When I ironed my shirts. Cooked a pan of appalling soup. Mowed a lawn.

Those acts were both physical and spiritual.

Those who attempt to distance our relationship from the God who cooked fish for the Apostles after the resurrection do our faith a great disservice.

However tied down as we often are to the day to day details of busy lives, it is easy to understand how this great divorce can take place.

How times of silence, prayer, contemplation can seem so far away from the necessities of the day.

As a priest these times of isolation have plunged me by force of circumstance into the recognition of the other side of the balance

Bored and calling for something physical to do.

I have been asked to pray.

Each morning I put out the bread and wine.

I light the candles and find the place in the missal and books of readings.

Each morning I pray with you

Physically calling upon the God of heaven to call upon you to remain safe and happy

Each morning I pray with the dead of our community

With the mother who brought her son into this church before he left for Flanders fields.

With the daughter who died so tragically and is daily mourned for.

With the old couple who lived long lives, and bless their families each day from eternity

Physically, practically, I pray with all those who have gone before us

And it is beautiful.

Have faith

Pray with me

And we shall get through this crisis

Then no doubt

emerge

And enter into the lives we once lead

Forgetting again that which matters.