

HOLY THURSDAY 2017

April 13, 2017— They were over 1,000 strong and, adding in our middle school children, that number grew even larger. This morning, before beginning their annual **Hunger Walk**, our Bishop Hendricken High School family came here to St. Kevin's for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Then they hit the streets for a 6-mile walk, giving witness to the hungry of our world and raising money for them.

Our own Nick Jones, who is serving tonight, led the way with a processional cross, putting Warwick and its many morning travelers on notice that we are here!

Father Nathan Ricci, a 2008 graduate of Hendricken, and one of our diocese's newly-ordained priests, delivered a beautiful reflection in the presence of the Bread of Life about the physical and spiritual hunger in us all—our yearning for food for our bodies and, more importantly, food for our souls.

That spiritual hunger—placed in us by the Almighty at the very beginning in a garden called Eden—was satisfied over 2000 years ago on this very night when a roaming Rabbi, in the final hours of His short life, sat at table with His chosen 12. He would give them—and us—the food of eternal life: His sacred Body and Blood, through His body that would be pierced and broken for us the very next day so that we could have Him in our lives forever.

My friends, tonight, as we gather in the solemnity of this celebration, we remember with great affection and gratitude that night in the **Upper Room**, so long ago, when the Savior peered at death and gave us **two** gifts: the **Holy Eucharist** and the **Priesthood**.

There in his own personal pain, as Calvary loomed large, how like Him not to think of Himself. Instead, to think of you and I who, so many centuries later, would need Him by our side and in our lives—just like those first friends who saw Him and cherished His presence in their midst during those earthly days.

You know, it is no coincidence that He chose those first 12: one who would betray Him; another who would deny Him; and all who would abandon Him when He needed them most. They would be the first links in a long and sturdy chain, the foundation of it all, telling us so clearly that these chosen few, imperfect though they were, sinful and human, would, even in their weakness, bear heavenly gifts, and even in their earthen vessels bear treasures of gold.

He would teach them that being a **servant** is never an easy task nor an easy life. Being last rather than first, being the slave and not the Master, was shunned then and is shunned now. But our Blessed Lord led the way, His life and His example made it clear: **greatness** in His Kingdom comes only to those who serve others.

And, just in case His words didn't get across at that table, He made sure that the image would be forever frozen in their minds. So He took off His cloak, as I will do in a few minutes, and knelt in the dust of that Upper Room to wash the feet of His first apostles to show them the way, and what *they* should do in His name.

My friends, **this Holy Thursday night**, in the peace of this place so filled with reverence, may our hearts swell with gratitude for a Savior who came from heaven so that heaven might one day be ours.

May our deeds and our lives make Him proud, and may we always cherish the privilege—both priests and faithful alike—to be **His** servants and to always follow the example that He left us.

God love You.