***The Triduum: Living a Paschal Life***

***The Triduum: An Extended Look at the Work of Re-Creation:*** No Dismissal (“Go now, the Mass has ended”) after Holy Thursday or Good Friday Liturgies: A Few Reasons for this: 1) Paying Attention—the Church wants to hold our focus; 2) What we attentively experience is a protracted look at the saving events that are *re*-presented at each and every Mass; 3) This protracted look at the saving action of God in Christ both teaches us how we are saved (wisdom) and gives us the strength (virtue) to live the salvation we experience (not just mentally recall how it came about).

***Creatio Ex Nihilo*: Formed to Perfection by Imitation of the Son’s turn to the Father**: “By so turning back and being formed creation imitates, every element in its own way, God the Word, that is the Son of God who always adheres to the Father in complete likeness and equality of being…so that it may be given form by adhering to the creator, and by imitating in its own measure the form [i.e., the Son] which adheres eternally and unchangingly to the Father, and which instantly gets from him to be the same thing as he is” (St. Augustine of Hippo, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 1.4,9).

***Two Lies and a Fall*: A Good Perverted—Awakening a desire to be god(s) apart from God: Prideful Ingratitude leads to Disobedience:** “The devil, therefore, would not have ensnared man in the open and obvious sin of doing what God had forbidden if man had not already begun to be pleased with himself. For it is precisely because he had begun to be pleased with himself that he was also delighted to hear You shall be like gods (Gn. 3:5). But they would have been better able to be like gods if they had clung to the true and supreme principle in obedience, instead of taking themselves as their own principle in pride (*superbium*). For created gods are not gods by virtue of any truth of their own but by virtue of participation in the true God. By grasping for more, then, a person becomes less when, in choosing to be self-sufficient, he defects from the only one who is truly sufficient for him” (Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, 14.13)

**The Fall to a *Regio Dissimilitudo:* Ignorance and Weakness the Consequences of the Fall**: “…by forsaking the one above itself with regard to whom alone it could keep its strength and enjoy him as its light, **it became weak and dark**, with the result that it was miserably dragged down from itself to things that are not what it is and are lower than itself by loves that it cannot master and confusions it can see no way out of” (Augustine, *The Trinity*, 14.14,18).

**Holy Thursday: Passover & *Tōda* Sacrifices: A *Tōda* sacrifice** recalls being saved by God from death or serious illness or peril (violence): “If a man is saved from death, from fatal illness or from those who seek his life, he celebrates this divine deliverance in a service of thanksgiving which marks an existential new start in his life. In it, he ‘confesses’ God to be his deliverer by celebrating a thankoffering (tōda)…It is not a mere sacrificial rite; it is a sacrifice in which one professes one’s own involvement” (Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, citing Harmut Gese, 55).

***Holy Thursday: A New Sacrifice:* The Institution of a Eucharistic Ethos:**“An ethos of the eucharist is born in this way in St. John’s gospel, where the gift of the body is not, or is no longer, limited to the transubstantiation of bread but spreads out to a habitus through which all believers becomes themselves the shared bread: ‘Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it’ (1 Cor. 12:27). This is recalled famously by St. Augustine: ‘It is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord’s table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving!...By what you see; receive what you are’” (Emmanuel Falque, *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb*, 220).

***Gethsemane: A Holy Hour:*** “Not what I will, but what you will” (see Matthew 26:39): Where Adam and Eve disobey, Christ lives the virtues of obedience and gratitude—aligning His human will to the will of God.

**Good Friday: The Tōdah Enacted: *Sacramentum et Exemplum*:** It is on the Cross (together with His subsequent death and Resurrection) that Christ Provides the Content of His *Tōdah* Sacrifice (*sacramentum*) by living it out, and thereby provides us an example of how to live in conformity with Him (*exemplum*).

**Good Friday: *Tōdah Exemplified:*** **Imitating the Sacrifice of Christ means participating in and imitating His Virtues:** In the Christian life, the virtues aren’t simply excellences of character or perfections of powers of the soul, but the power to participatorily imitate the life of Christ, and thereby make his life present to the world.

**Solemn Blessing for The Passion of the Lord:** “May God, the Father of mercies, who has given you an example of love in the Passion of his Only Begotten Son, grant that by serving God and your neighbor, you may lay hold of the wondrous gift of his blessing…And by following the example of his self-abasement, may you possess a share in his Resurrection” (St. Paul Daily Missal, 935).

**Holy Saturday:By dying He destroyed our death:** Christ approaches Adam and Eve with Cross in hand and says: “I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner of hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated” (Ancient Homily on Holy Saturday, *Christian Prayer*, 1988).

**The Work of Salvation/Re-Creation Accomplished:**“It was of course on the day of the sabbath that [Christ] rested in the tomb, and he had the whole of that day as a kind of holy vacation, after he had finished all his works on the sixth day, that is, Preparation Day…” (Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 1.4.11,21).

**Easter Vigil: Rising Restores Life: *The Exsultet*:** “This is the night that even now, throughout the world, sets Christian believers apart from worldly vices and from the gloom of sin, leading them to grace and joining them to his holy ones…O truly blessed night, when things of heaven are wed to those of earth, and divine to the human.”

**Reception of the Eucharist:** “It is, if I may say so, by spiritually embracing Him that the intellectual soul is filled and impregnated with true virtues (*fecundaturque virtutibus*)” (Augustine, City of God, 10.3).

***Living a Paschal Life:*** **By Imitating the Paschal Sacrifice of Christ the Whole of Life becomes *Anamnetic***: A remembering of God’s salvific work on our behalf, and a living out of that salvation, for “It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere **to give you thanks**, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord” (Common Preface I, *St. Paul Daily Missal*, 923).

**Proclaiming Salvation to the World:** To the Extent we live a virtuous life, we proclaim to the world that we were once falling back to the nothingness from which we came, but that God has saved us through Christ, and by His grace given us the strength (virtue) to participate in His life, and so proclaim to the world how He has saved us, through complete, self-sacrificing love.

***Regio Similitudo***: By living a Paschal Life, not only do we become more like God, but transform our families and communities into places where the love of God is made known and present.