Our Gospel today is taken from Jesus’ “Last Supper Discourse” (John 13-17); it might be called “Jesus’ farewell Address.” Several significant events have preceded the words of Jesus that we hear today. He has washed his disciples’ feet and explained its meaning in terms of radical service (13:1-20). Jesus has foretold his betrayal by Judas (13:21-30). He has told his disciples that he will soon depart from them (13:33). He has also given them the new commandment of love (13:34-35) and foretold Peter’s imminent denial (13:36-38). No wonder the disciples are deeply troubled and filled with anxiety!

It is precisely in this turbulent context that Jesus speaks comforting words, assuring his disciples that he is not abandoning them: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me” (Jn 14:1). Indeed, Jesus is giving several consoling assurances to his disciples; we can identify at least five of Jesus’ “promises”—all captured in words that begin with the letter P.

**Peace of Heart.** Jesus tells his disciples that their faith must be a united faith, both in his Father and in him as the Son of the Father. This is complete faith, a faith that produces peace of heart. Jesus clearly assures his disciples that he is going to his Father; he will not abandon them, though he is going away. With this assurance, the disciples’ hearts should be at peace.

**Place in Heaven.** Jesus comforts his disciples by assuring them that there are “many rooms in my Father’s house” and that he is preparing places for them in his Father’s kingdom. In other words, life will not end with one’s death here on earth. After our earthly journey, which may be filled with many difficulties and challenges, an eternal home awaits us in heaven. We recall Jesus’ words to Martha: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, he shall live forever” (Jn 11:25).

**Promise of Return.** Jesus assures his disciples that he will personally return and take them with him. “I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you” (Jn 14:18). Though Jesus may leave his disciples briefly as he experiences his passion and death, he will return as resurrected Lord and personally escort his followers to their eternal home in his Father’s house. Their faith will be severely tested, but their ultimate happiness is assured.

**Presence of the Father.** The disciples, especially Thomas, struggle to believe Jesus’ promises; they seem lost and do not know the way. Jesus assures them that he is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (Jn 14:6), and that they will come to the Father through him: “I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (Jn 14:10).

**Performance of Christ-like Deeds.** Remarkably, Jesus says: “If you most sincerely, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself; he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father…. If you ask for anything in my name, I will do it” (Jn 14:12-14).

**Conclusion.** Friends, we, like the disciples at the last supper, are often incredulous and weak in faith; Jesus’ promises seem outrageous and too good to be true. We humbly ask the Lord for deeper faith, seeking the dynamic presence and action of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We recall Pope Francis’ words in Tacloban during his 2015 pastoral visit: “Jesus is Lord and he never lets us down!” — Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

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**PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF ECUMENISM, INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

**Engaging in Interfaith Dialogue**

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

In the Philippines today when one hears about “interreligious” or “interfaith” dialogue, one almost automatically thinks of Muslim-Christian relations (though there are other faith groups, such as Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs, in the country). Muslims form the second largest religion; best estimates assert that 5-6% of Filipinos are Muslims. Traditionally, Muslims were mostly confined to the southern part of the country; however, this has significantly changed due to migration over the past two decades. Today there is a Muslim presence in almost all cities and towns.

Recent unfortunate events have also brought a deeper awareness of Muslim presence. In the 1970s-1980s there were protracted conflicts in Mindanao and thousands became fleeing refugees. In 2013 the Zamboanga “siege” or “crisis” unfolded. The five-month-long armed conflict in Marawi in 2017 became the longest urban battle in modern Philippine history.

In painting our picture of Muslim presence, we could add some global statistics. Today worldwide there are more Muslims than Catholics; approximate percentages of world religious population (2012 estimates) are: Catholics (16.10%), Muslims (22.32%), Christians [total] (31.50%). As Catholics in the Philippines, we ask: What is the Church’s response to the multi-religious context of the contemporary world?
God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. (Pause)
Almighty ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading (Acts 6:1–7) (Sit)

Inspired by the Spirit, the young community of believers in Jerusalem grew in number and in organization. Seven men are selected as deacons to assist the apostles.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

AS THE NUMBER of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

Second Reading (1 Pt 2:4–9)

Christian believers are like living stones which make up the holy temple of God. This is grace as well as responsibility.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter

BELOVED: Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen
and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in Scripture: Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame. Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and a stone that will make people stumble, and a rock that will make them fall. They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny.

You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Jn 14:9) (Stand)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. I am the way, the truth and the life, says the Lord; no one comes to the Father, except through me. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Jn 14:1–12)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All — Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS said to his disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All — I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, (At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary, all bow.) who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — Let us bring before the Father the needs of the universal Church, our community, and the world. We trust that God will listen to us because we pray in Jesus’ name. Let us say:

R — Lord, hear our prayer.

C — For the Holy Father Francis, our bishops, priests, and deacons: may they not tire of presenting Christ as the one Mediator between God and humankind, who alone leads us to the Father. We pray: (R)

C — For our government officials: following the example of the deacons of the early Church, may they apply themselves to public service and strive to attend to the needs of the people. We pray: (R)

C — For those who are beset by trouble, loneliness, and fear of death: may they be strengthened by their faith in the Lord Jesus and in the loving mercy of the Father. We pray: (R)

C — For our ecclesial and parish community: like the first Christians, may we strive for peace, harmony, and sharing within our community. We pray: (R)

C — For those who are in most need of God’s help: may the Lord come quickly to their assistance, and may they find solace in their faith. We pray: (R)

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray: (R)

P — Heavenly Father, you have given us Jesus your Son to be our way, our truth, and our life. Help us to listen to him and put his teaching into practice, that we may be worthy to enter into your kingdom, where he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

All — Amen.
Presentation of the Gifts (Stand)

P — Pray, brethren...
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — O God, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice have made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead, grant, we pray, that, as we have come to know your truth, we may make it ours by a worthy way of life.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface V of Easter

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.
P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.
P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfillment in the reality of the Cross and, by commending himself to you for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice.

Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exult in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:
All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Pilgrimages & Tours

LOS COLORES DEL CIELO: THE COLORS OF HEAVEN
at Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico (Nov 4 - 14)
with Fr. Emmanuel "Pong" del Rosario
Mexico with optional extension to Cuba

HOLY LAND BEYOND THE BASICS (Nov 17 - 30)
Fr. Domie Guzman, SSP
Israel

CHRISTMAS IN BETHLEHEM
with Fr. Harold Parilla
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The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Aclamación (Stand)
All — When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

The Communion Rite

The Lord’s Prayer
All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us, Lord...
All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion (Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.
All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Cf. Jn 15:1, 5)
I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.

Prayer after Communion (Stand)

P — Let us pray. (Pause)
Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from the former ways to newness of life.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

The Concluding Rites

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)
May your people receive your holy blessing, O Lord, we pray, and, by that gift, spurn all that would harm them and obtain what they desire.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (+) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go forth, the Mass is ended.
All — Thanks be to God.