

- *“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”*
- Tonight we commemorate three things of our faith in particular: the institution of the Eucharist...and, in order to continue to bring the Eucharist to mankind, the institution of the priesthood; and, finally, Jesus’ commandment of charity toward our fellow man.
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- The Passover of the Israelites was simply from earthly slavery to earthly freedom—a foreshadowing of the true and infinitely greater Passover—from spiritual slavery to spiritual freedom and eternal life.
- The word “pass over” originally referred to the angel of death’s “passing over” the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when it saw the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses, as we read in our first reading.
- Likewise, eternal death “passes over” us when it sees the blood of the True Lamb of God on the lips of believers...the blood from the bread and wine which is be transformed (“transubstantiated”) as the Body & Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.
- For, at the Last Supper Jesus declares *“This IS my body...this IS my blood”* ...and He institutes the priesthood when He says: “Do this in memory of Me”...ensuring that the Eucharist will be present for His disciples until His Second Coming.
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- The Eucharist is many things...the word itself from the Greek for “thanksgiving”.
- It is both memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ, and actual participation in that sacrifice—reaching through time to the cross... and reaching up to Heaven as a participation of the Heavenly liturgy and the eternal worship of God.

- And it is ONE sacrifice, not many. Each celebration of the Mass neither repeats nor “sacrifices again”, but is a participation in the ONE sacrifice of Christ Himself, which remains ever present.
  - The Eucharist...by far the greatest of sacraments—the sacrament from which all other sacraments receive their own grace and meaning...the source and summit of Christian life...and in it is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church—for it is Jesus Himself.
  - It is the pinnacle of the sanctification of the world, and the pinnacle of the worship men offer to God... through Christ to the Father and the Holy Spirit.
  - It is also sign of unity...and our reception of the Eucharist is a proclamation of faith—in Christ, and in His Church.
  - This is why the Eucharist is reserved for Catholics alone, because of that unity in the Church.
  - Finally, it is the perfect sacrifice...perfect worship of God... infinitely surpassing every and all sacrifices of the Old Covenant. It is the eternal sacrifice.
  - This is why we come to Sunday Mass and not just pray on our own...because our own prayers, while good in themselves, cannot compare to the efficacy and the magnificence of this Holy Sacrifice...and thus must not be used as an excuse to absent ourselves from the sacred assembly of believers on the Lord’s day.
  - How can that possibly be pleasing to God? On the contrary, the Church teaches us that it is a grave and mortal sin to absent ourselves unnecessarily from the Sunday obligation of Mass...not keeping holy the Lord’s Day as HE wants us to keep it holy.
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- To perpetuate this living sacrifice, Jesus established the priesthood in His apostles...passed on to others through ordination and the laying

on of hands, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul.

- The celebration of the Eucharist is the priest's primary duty...to offer to the Father the sacrifice of Christ Himself.
- Now the apostles were the first bishops... ordained to serve, to govern, to teach, and to offer sacrifice.
- The ordained priest is simply the bishop's assistant—assigned to care for a given community...not a priest on his own, but is given authority by the bishop—the apostle—of Christ.
- That's why the Church is adamant that a priest cannot do whatever his whim leads him to want to do. The liturgy is not his, but rather belongs to the whole Church.

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- And finally, by washing of the apostles' feet, Jesus shows us the nobility of service—to serve one another in humility.
  - And to give example, Jesus—God—submitted Himself to this humblest and most menial of services: the washing of feet.
  - So we take our lesson from Christ...who washes the feet even of Judas, who Jesus knew was planning to betray Him...making good His teaching: *“Love thine enemies; do good to those who hate you.”*
  - And if God Himself humbles himself in this way, do we dare say that we are “too good” for others, or for anything...or that we cannot forgive this or that offense?
  - Jesus tells us: *“If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”* (Mark 9:35). He declared: *“I come to serve, not to be served”*...therefore we, His disciples, ought to see humble service as the greatest of vocations...the greatest of virtues.
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- God told Moses that the Israelites were to eat the Passover meal “... *with loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand, you shall eat like those who are in flight.*”
- We, too, should live in this way...knowing that this earthly life is simply a journey through the desert...its trials and sorrows simply challengers to be hurdled...
- ...and our true destination...our true home...the end of our journey...is awaiting us with God in Heaven.

Reading 1

[Ex 12:1-8, 11-14](#)

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,  
"This month shall stand at the head of your calendar;  
you shall reckon it the first month of the year.

Tell the whole community of Israel:

On the tenth of this month every one of your families  
must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household.

If a family is too small for a whole lamb,  
it shall join the nearest household in procuring one  
and shall share in the lamb

in proportion to the number of persons who partake of it.

The lamb must be a year-old male and without blemish.

You may take it from either the sheep or the goats.

You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month,  
and then, with the whole assembly of Israel present,  
it shall be slaughtered during the evening twilight.

They shall take some of its blood  
and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel  
of every house in which they partake of the lamb.

That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh  
with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

"This is how you are to eat it:  
with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand,  
you shall eat like those who are in flight.

It is the Passover of the LORD.

For on this same night I will go through Egypt,  
striking down every firstborn of the land, both man and beast,  
and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt—I, the LORD!

But the blood will mark the houses where you are.

Seeing the blood, I will pass over you;

thus, when I strike the land of Egypt,  
no destructive blow will come upon you.

"This day shall be a memorial feast for you,  
which all your generations shall celebrate  
with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a perpetual institution."

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18](#)

R. (cf. 1 Cor 10:16) **Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.**

How shall I make a return to the LORD  
for all the good he has done for me?

The cup of salvation I will take up,  
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

R. **Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.**

Precious in the eyes of the LORD  
is the death of his faithful ones.

I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;  
you have loosed my bonds.

R. **Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.**

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,  
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

My vows to the LORD I will pay  
in the presence of all his people.

R. **Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.**

Reading II

[1 Cor 11:23-26](#)

Brothers and sisters:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,  
that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over,  
took bread, and, after he had given thanks,  
broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,  
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

**For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,  
you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.**

Gospel

[Jn 13:1-15](#)

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come  
to pass from this world to the Father.

**He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end.**

**The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.**

So, during supper,

fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power  
and that he had come from God and was returning to God,

he rose from supper and took off his outer garments.  
He took a towel and tied it around his waist.  
Then he poured water into a basin  
and began to wash the disciples feet  
and dry them with the towel around his waist.  
He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,  
"Master, are you going to wash my feet?"  
Jesus answered and said to him,  
"What I am doing, you do not understand now,  
but you will understand later."  
Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet."  
Jesus answered him,  
"Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."  
Simon Peter said to him,  
"Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."  
Jesus said to him,  
"Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed,  
for he is clean all over;  
so you are clean, but not all."  
For he knew who would betray him;  
for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So when he had washed their feet  
and put his garments back on and reclined at table again,  
he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you?  
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am.  
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet,  
you ought to wash one another's feet.  
I have given you a model to follow,  
so that as I have done for you, you should also do."