

- *“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”*
- Tonight’s celebration recognizes especially three things of our faith: 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.
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- The Passover of the Israelites was from slavery to freedom—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 which had the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their houses, as we read in our first reading.
- God commanded the Israelites to celebrate the Passover annually by sacrificing a spotless lamb and consuming it in memory of that release from slavery.
- Likewise, in the Christian context, eternal slavery and death “passes over” us who have consumed the blood of the True Lamb of God... the Body & Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.
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- That Jesus intended the Last Supper as a sacrifice is clear by choosing to celebrate it at the Passover meal...using almost the same words spoken at the institution of the Old Covenant, when Moses said: *“This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you...”* (Exodus 24:8 NAB)
- And Jesus declares *“This IS my body...this IS my blood”* ...and He institutes the priesthood when He says: *“Do this in memory of Me”*...wanting the Eucharist—His bodily presence—with His disciples until His Second Coming.

- Christ conceals His presence in the form of bread and wine, masking the splendor of His divine glory and majesty...and even masking His humanity.
- Thus, the great humility by which He reconcile us to the Father, for in His humanity He represents all Mankind in humbling Himself for the sins of the world.
- His disciples—His Church—are His Body. And, as many grains of wheat make up the bread which becomes the Eucharist, and as many grapes are used to make the wine which will become His Blood, His disciples make up His Body, with Himself as its Head.

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- The Eucharist is both memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ, and actual participation in that sacrifice—reaching back to Calvary...and also into Heaven as a participation of the Heavenly liturgy and the eternal worship of God.
 - ...ONE sacrifice, not many. Each Mass neither repeats nor “sacrifices again”, but is a participation in that ONE sacrifice of Christ Himself—ever present in the Mass.
 - The Eucharist is thus the chief and central act of Catholic worship from which all other sacraments receive their own grace and meaning...for it is Jesus Himself.
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 - We see this in that some sacraments—confirmation and holy orders—can only be administered within the Mass—vessels of grace filled from the source of grace.
 - The Eucharist is the sanctification of the world, and the pinnacle of the worship men offer to God... through Christ to the Father and the Holy Spirit...a sign of unity in the Body of Christ, the Church.
 - It is the perfect sacrifice...the perfect worship of God... infinitely surpassing every and all sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

- That is why no other act of worship remotely compares to that provided in our participation in the Mass, because it is participation in the sacrifice of the divine Son to His Father.
 - Thus our obligation under pain of sin—and yet much more so, our privilege—of participating in the Mass each week on the Lord’s Day.
 - When we dismiss Mass for a trivial reason, we shrug off this sacrifice of salvation and eternal life.
 - So there is literally nothing more important than our participation in the Mass—the Body coming together in communal worship of God the Father with our captain, Jesus Christ.
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- To perpetuate this living sacrifice of Himself, 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.
 - Thus the celebration of the Eucharist is the priest’s primary duty above all...to offer to the Father the sacrifice of Christ Himself.
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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.
 - Thus God Himself willingly takes on this humblest and most menial of services: the washing of feet...giving us a model to follow, as He stated in the Gospel.
 - So we take our lesson from Him...who washes the feet even of Judas, whom Jesus knew was to betray Him...making good His teaching: “*Love thine enemies; do good to those who hate you.*”
 - 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, are to live in this way...knowing that we are simply journeying in a land not home...its trials and sorrows simply challenges to be endured and overcome...
- ...for our destination...our true home... awaits 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."