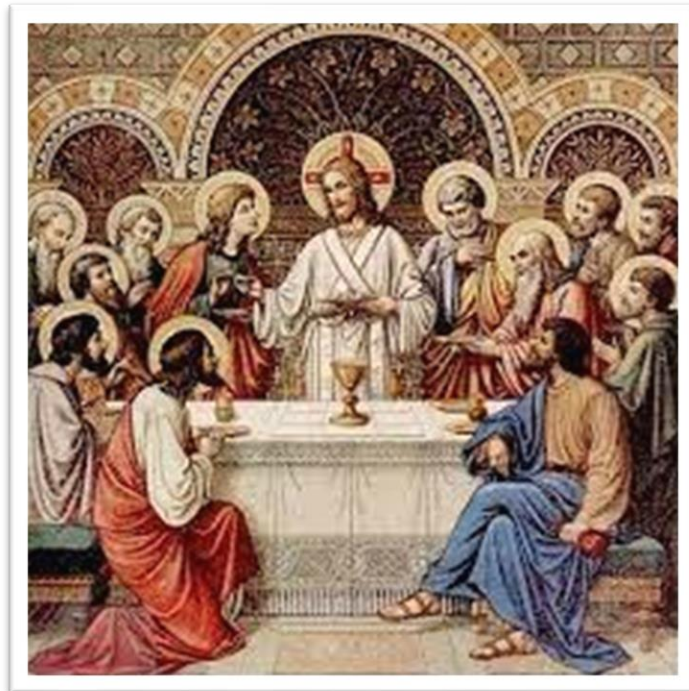


## The Last Pasch

Jesus and his disciples ate the Paschal Lamb in the supper-room. They divided into three groups. Jesus ate the Paschal Lamb with the twelve Apostles in the supper-room, properly so called; Nathaniel with twelve other disciples in one of the lateral rooms, and Eliacim (the son of Cleophas and Mary, the daughter of Heli), who had been a disciple of John the Baptist, with twelve more, in another side-room.

Three lambs were immolated for them in the Temple, but there was a fourth lamb which was immolated in the supper-room, and was the one eaten by Jesus with his Apostles. Judas

was not aware of this circumstance, because being engaged in plotting his betrayal of our Lord, he only returned a few moments before the repast, and after the immolation of the lamb had taken place. Most touching was the scene of the immolation of the lamb to be eaten by Jesus and his Apostles; it took place in the vestibule of the supper-room. The Apostles and disciples were present, singing the 118th Psalm. Jesus spoke of a new period then beginning, and said that the sacrifice of Moses and the figure of the Paschal Lamb were about to receive their accomplishment, but that on this very account, the lamb was to be immolated in the same manner as formerly in Egypt, and that they were really about to go forth from the house of bondage. The vessels and necessary instruments were prepared, and then the attendants brought a beautiful little lamb, decorated with a crown, which was sent to the Blessed Virgin in the room where she had remained with the other holy women. The lamb was fastened with its back against a board by a cord around its body, and reminded me of Jesus tied to the pillar and scourged. The son of Simeon held the lamb's head; Jesus made a slight incision in its neck with the point of a knife, which he then gave to the son of Simeon, that he might complete killing it. Jesus appeared to inflict the wound with a feeling of repugnance, and he was quick in his movements, although his countenance was grave, and his manner such as to inspire respect. The blood flowed into a basin, and the attendants brought a branch of hyssop, which Jesus dipped in it. Then he went to the door of the room, stained the sideposts



and the lock with blood, and placed the branch which had been dipped in blood above the door.

He then spoke to the disciples, and told them, among other things, that the exterminating angel would pass by, that they would adore in that room without fear or anxiety, when he, the true Paschal Lamb, should have been immolated—that a new epoch and a new sacrifice were about to begin, which would last to the end of the world.

They then went to the other side of the room, near the hearth where the Ark of the Covenant had formerly stood. Fire had already been lighted there, and Jesus poured some blood upon the hearth, consecrating it as an altar; and the remainder of the blood and the fat were thrown on the fire beneath the altar, after which Jesus, followed by his Apostles, walked round the supper-room, singing some psalms, and consecrating it as a new Temple.

The doors were all closed during this time. Meanwhile the son of Simeon had completed the preparation of the lamb. He passed a stake through its body, fastening the front legs on a cross piece of wood; and stretching the hind ones along the stake. It bore a strong resemblance to Jesus on the cross, and was placed in the oven, to be there roasted with the three other lambs brought from the Temple. The Paschal Lambs of the Jews were all immolated in the vestibule of the Temple, but in different parts, according as the persons who were to eat them were rich, or poor, or

strangers. The Paschal Lamb belonging to Jesus was not immolated in the Temple, but everything else was done strictly according to the law. Jesus again addressed his disciples,

saying that the lamb was but a figure, that he himself would next day be the true Paschal Lamb, together with other things which I have forgotten.

When Jesus had finished his instructions concerning the Paschal Lamb and its signification, the time being come, and Judas also returned, the tables were set out. The disciples put on travelling dresses which were in the vestibule, different shoes, a white robe resembling a shirt, and a cloak, which was short in front and longer behind, their sleeves were large and turned back, and they girded up their clothes around the waist. Each party went to their own table; and two sets of disciples in the side rooms, and our Lord and his Apostles in the supper-room. They held staves in their hands, and went two and two to the She here again explained the manner in which the families assembled together, and in what numbers. But the writer has forgotten her words.

table, where they remained standing, each in his own place, with the stave resting on his arms, and his hands upraised.

The table was narrow, and about half a foot higher than the knees of a man; in shape it resembled a horseshoe, and opposite Jesus, in the inner part of the half-circle, there was a space left vacant, that the attendants might be able to set down the dishes. As far as I can remember, John, James the Greater, and James the Less sat on the right-hand of Jesus; after them Bartholomew, and then, round the corner, Thomas and Judas Iscariot. Peter, Andrew, and Thaddeus sat on the left of Jesus; next came Simon, and then (round the corner) Matthew and Philip.

The Paschal Lamb was placed on a dish in the centre of the table. Its head rested on its front legs, which were fastened to a cross-stick, its hind legs being stretched out, and the dish

was garnished with garlic. By the side there was a dish with the Paschal roast meat, then came a plate with green vegetables balanced against each other, and another plate with

small bundles of bitter herbs, which had the appearance of aromatic herbs.

Opposite Jesus there was also one dish with different herbs, and a second containing a brown-coloured sauce of beverage. The guest had before them some round loaves instead of plates, and they used ivory knives.

After the prayer, the major-domo laid the knife for cutting the lamb on the table before Jesus, who placed a cup of wine before him, and filled six other cups, each one of which stood between two Apostles. Jesus blessed the wine and drank, and the Apostles drank two together out of one cup. Then our Lord proceeded to cut up the lamb; his Apostles presented their pieces of bread in turn, and each received his share. They ate it in haste, separating the flesh from the bone, by means of their ivory knives, and the bones were afterwards burnt. They also ate the garlic and green herbs in haste, dipping them in the sauce.

All this time they remained standing, only leaning slightly on the backs of their seats. Jesus brake one of the loaves of unleavened bread, covered up a part of it, and divided the remainder among his Apostles. Another cup of wine was brought, but Jesus drank not of it: 'Take this,' he said, 'and divide it among you, for I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father' (Matt. 26:29). When they had drunk the wine, they sang a hymn; then Jesus prayed or taught, and they again washed their hands. After this they sat down. Our Lord cut up another lamb which was carried to the holy women in one of the

buildings of the court, where they were seated at table. The Apostles ate some more vegetables and lettuce. The countenance of our Divine Saviour bore an indescribable expression of serenity and recollection, greater than I had ever before seen. He bade the Apostles forget all their cares. The Blessed Virgin also, as she sat at table with the other women, looked most placid and calm. When the other women came up, and took hold of her veil to make her turn round and speak to them, her every movement expressed the sweetest self-control and placidity of spirit.

At first Jesus conversed lovingly and calmly with his disciples, but after a while he became grave and sad: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me:' he said, 'he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish' (Matt. 26:21.23). Jesus was then distributing the lettuce, of which there was only one dish, to those Apostles who were by his side, and he had given Judas, who was nearly opposite to him, the office of distributing it to the others. When Jesus spoke of a traitor, an expression which filled all the Apostles with fear, he said: 'he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish,' which means: 'one of the twelve who are eating and drinking with me—one of those with whom I am eating bread.' He did not plainly point out Judas to the others by these words; for to dip the hand in the same dish was an expression used to signify the most friendly and intimate intercourse. He was desirous, however, to give a warning to Judas, who was then really dipping his hand in the dish with our Saviour, to distribute the lettuce. Jesus continued to speak: 'The Son of Man indeed goeth,' he said, 'as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed: It were better for him if that man had not been born.'

The Apostles were very much troubled, and each one of them exclaimed: 'Lord, is it I?' for they were all perfectly aware that they did not entirely understand his words. Peter leaned towards John, behind Jesus, and made him a sign to ask our Lord who the traitor was to be, for, having so often been reprov'd by our Lord, he trembled lest it should be himself who was referred to. John was seated at the right hand of Jesus, and as all were leaning on their left arms, using the right to eat, his head was close to the bosom of Jesus. He leaned then on his breast and said: 'Lord, who is it?' I did not see Jesus say to him with his lips: 'He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped.' I do not know whether he whispered it to him, but John knew it, when Jesus having dipped the bread, which was covered with lettuce, gave it

tenderly to Judas, who also asked: 'Is it I, Lord?' Jesus looked at him with love, and answered him in general terms. Among the Jews, to give bread dipped was a mark of friendship and confidence; Jesus on this occasion gave Judas the morsel, in order thus to warn him, without making known his guilt to the others. But the heart of Judas burned with anger, and during the whole time of the repast, I saw a frightful little figure seated at his feet, and sometimes ascending to his heart. I did not see John repeat to Peter what he had learned from Jesus, but he set his fears at rest by a look.