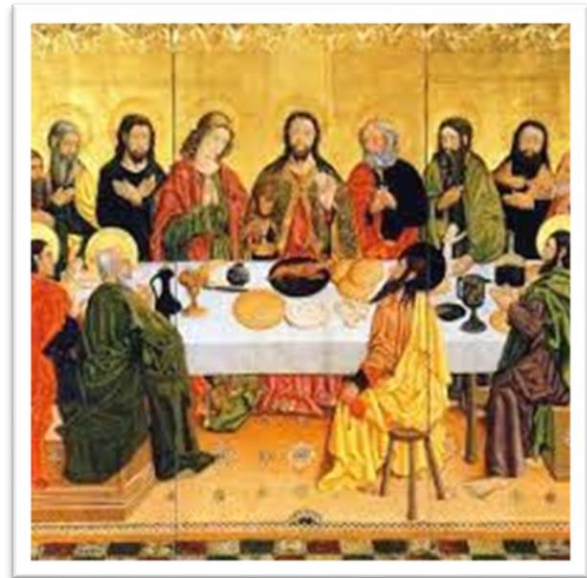


Peter Celebrates the First Holy Mass in the Last Supper Room

On the eighth day after Pentecost, I saw the Apostles busily engaged the whole night in the house of the Last Supper, praying, etc. At daybreak they went with many of the disciples into the Temple, to which the Blessed Virgin and the holy women had preceded them. There appeared to be a feast going on, for in front of the entrance a triumphal arch had been erected upon which stood a figure holding a conqueror's sword. Beneath this arch Peter addressed a great crowd of people in powerful language. He told them openly that no punishment, neither scourging nor crucifixion, should deter them from publicly proclaiming Jesus Christ. He then entered the Temple and preached from the teacher's chair that Jesus had so often occupied. Once I heard all the Apostles and disciples interrupting Peter's discourse with a loud "Yes," as if in confirmation of his words. Afterward, when they were engaged in prayer, I saw a cloud of light hovering over the Temple, and such rays streaming down upon them that the tiny flames of the lamps looked quite dim and red compared with them. Toward eight o'clock that morning, they left the Temple. In the court of the heathens they formed in a long procession, two by two, first the Apostles, after them the disciples, then the baptized and the newly converted. They proceeded across the cattle market to the sheep gate, out into the Valley of Josaphat, and thence up Sion to the house of the Last Supper. The Blessed Virgin and the other women had left the Temple some time previously, in order to kneel alone before the Blessed Sacrament and pray. Magdalen prayed in the entrance hall sometimes standing, sometimes kneeling, or again prostrate on the ground, her arms outstretched. The other women had retired into their cells adjoining the church of Bethsaida. There they dwelt two together, occupying their time in washing and preparing the baptismal garments for the neophytes, and with the arrangement of such things for distribution.

When the procession reached the court of the Last Supper house, the new converts were ranged in order by the Apostles outside the entrance hall. Peter and John went into the house and escorted the Blessed Virgin to the door of the entrance hall. She was clothed in robes of ceremony. She wore



the long white mantle with the embroidered facing down the sides, and over her veil the narrow scarf that hung down on either side and was kept in place by a wreath. Peter addressed the new converts and presented them to the Blessed Virgin as to their common Mother. He led them forward in bands of about twenty, one after another, and they received the benediction of the Blessed Virgin.

After that I saw solemn service celebrated in the Last Supper room, into which the side halls and entrance hall were thrown open. In the sanctuary over the altar hung a festal wreath of green leaves and flowers. On either side of the chalice, that used at the Last Supper, were lighted lamps. The chalice was raised on a stand of some kind, and concealed under a little white cover. There was also on the altar a smaller chalice and some bread, both covered, and behind them a plate upon which stood two vessels, one for water, the other for wine. The plate was put aside; then the water vessel was placed at one end of the altar, the wine vessel at the other.

Peter, vested in his episcopal mantle, celebrated holy Mass. John and James the Less served him. I saw all the ceremonies performed just as Jesus had performed them at the institution of the Holy Eucharist: the Offertory, the pouring of wine into the chalice, the washing of the fingers, and the Consecration. Wine and water were poured at different sides of the altar, on one end of which were lying the rolls of Scripture. They were written in two columns and, by means of pegs placed higher or lower on the desk that supported them, they could be rolled or unrolled. When one leaf was read, it was thrown over the desk. There were many leaves lying one over another. After Peter had communicated, he handed his two assistants the Sacrament, the Bread and the Chalice. Then John handed the Sacrament first to the Blessed Virgin, then to the Apostles and the six disciples, who afterward received priestly ordination, and to many others. The communicants were kneeling, before them a narrow linen cloth, which two held on either side. I did not see the Faithful partake of the chalice.

The six disciples who now received ordination were thereby advanced to a rank above the disciples, though below that of the Apostles. Mary brought the vestments for them and laid them on the altar. The disciples ordained were Zacheus, Nathanael, Joses Barsabas, Barnabas, John Mark, and Eliud, a son of the aged Simeon. They knelt, two by two, before Peter, who addressed them and read prayers from a little roll. John and James held lights in one hand and laid the other on their shoulders, while Peter imposed his on their head. Peter cut some hair from their head and placed it on the altar in the little plate; then he anointed their head and fingers from a box that John was holding. The vestments were next put on, the stole being crossed first

under the arm and then in front over the breast. I saw that the ceremonies, though more solemn, were shorter than at the present day. At the close of the solemnity, Peter blessed the Faithful with the large chalice of the Last Supper in which reposed the Blessed Sacrament.

Mary and the other women went after that to the church of the Pool of Bethsaida. The Apostles, disciples, and the neophytes went thither also in procession with singing. Mary prayed there kneeling before the altar in the choir. Peter gave an instruction from the pulpit in reference to the order to be observed in the new Community. No one, he said, was to have more than the others. All must share what they had and provide for the poor newcomers. His discourse, moreover, embodied thanks for the Saviour's graces, and blessings upon the Community.

Baptism was next administered, and several of the Apostles were engaged in it. Two laid their hands upon the neophytes who, holding the railing of the little bridge that led to the pump, bowed their head to the stream issuing from it. Peter, who had put on his girdle over his white garment, turned the stream three times with his hand over the head of the neophyte, pronouncing the words at the same moment. I often saw a radiant cloud dissolving over the baptized, or a ray of light falling upon them, I saw that they were marvelously strengthened and, as it were, transfigured, transformed. It was most touching to see people from far-off countries leaving all that belonged to them, and coming hither to form one with the Community of Jesus. At the edge of the pool burned a light on a pole, just such a one as those used by the guards at the Holy Sepulcher.

That evening in the entrance hall of the house of the Last Supper, a meal was spread during which the Blessed Virgin sat at table with the Apostles, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and Lazarus.