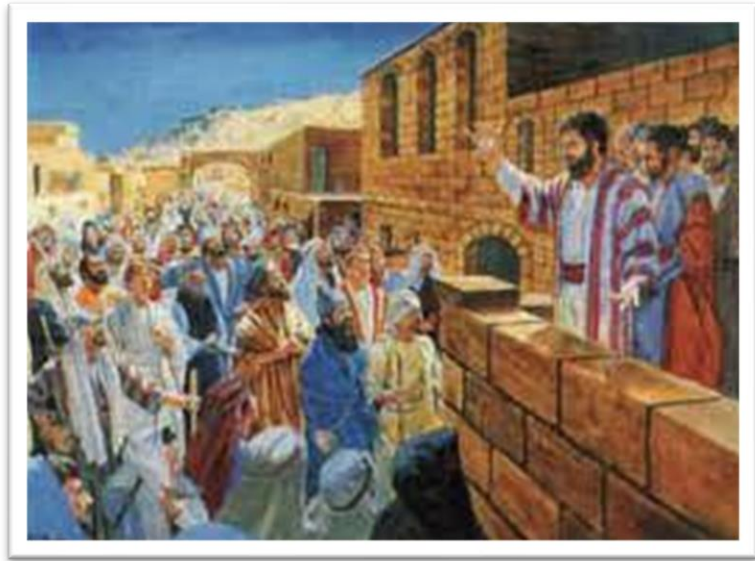


Increase of the Community

The number of the Faithful continued to increase, Many came to join them, especially from the Galilean Sea, with asses laden with baggage. It kept some busy procuring them quarters. They generally stopped first at the disciples' inn outside Bethania, where the disciples dwelt in turn to receive the strangers, and give them advice and directions. The newcomers were sent by them to

Lazarus, who owned many houses and dwellings. Many of them lived at Jerusalem also, in the quarter of Mount Sion. Only a few poor Jews were scattered around here. There were numerous old walls of extraordinary thickness, and vacant lots on which I saw asses grazing. Strangers who had come for the feast pitched their tents around this quarter. Besides the house of the Last Supper, there was another on Mount Sion, a very large, dilapidated old building (the Citadel of David), and numbers of the Faithful found shelter under its surroundings. They dwelt in huts, or in lodgings adjoining them. I saw that people dwelt below in the massive walls, while on their top were erected tents of coarse tapestry. The Chaldeans from Sikdor, whom Jesus had directed to the Centurion of Capharnaum, and who had from there returned to their homes, were now come back again in great numbers with their beasts of burden and baggage. Their beasts and packs were standing in the inner court of the large, dilapidated building. The Jews did not molest them; only the road to the Temple mount and to the quarter of the city belonging to it was entirely walled up on the side of Mount Sion near the Pool of Bethesda where the Christians were stopping. The Community was thereby completely separated, cut off from the Jews.

I saw the newcomers resigning, for the good of the Community, quantities of stuffs of fine and coarse, white and yellowish wool, carpets, canvas for tents, all in great rolls. Nicodemus and Joseph managed everything. Garments for religious service and Baptism were made out of some, and some was given to the needy, all of whom were cared for.



There was, at the Pool of Bethesda, an old synagogue formerly used only by strangers come for the feast. It stood at some elevation above the pool. The Apostles now appropriated it to their own use. In it the newcomers assembled to be instructed by some of the Apostles. But all these strangers were not at once admitted to the Community, much less to the house of the Last Supper. I saw neither the Apostles nor the disciples, nor these newly arrived again frequenting the Temple. True, the Apostles, having received the Holy Ghost, went there after Pentecost, but it was only that they might preach to the assembled multitude. Their Temple was the house of the Last Supper that sheltered the Blessed Sacrament. The Mother of all was the Blessed Virgin. The Apostles consulted with her, and she was for them like an Apostle herself.

Peter's wife and daughter, Mark's wife, and other women had now come from Bethesda to Bethania, where they dwelt under tents. They had no communication whatever with the men. They came into the presence of the Apostles only for instruction, and they employed themselves in weaving and twisting long strips of stuff and coarse covers for tents, many of them working at the same time upon one piece. The Blessed Virgin also, along with Martha and Magdalen, worked at embroidery, sometimes reclining, sometimes walking about, work in hand. I saw the Blessed Virgin embroidering in delicate colors figures something like an Apostle, or the Lord Himself, on a yellow, brown, or sky-blue ground. The figures were not so enveloped in mantles as formerly. Once they embroidered a representation of the Most Holy Trinity. It was like God the Father handing the cross to the Son, who looked like a High Priest. From both proceeded the Holy Ghost, though not in the form of a dove, for instead of wings there were arms. The figures were arranged more in a triangular form than one below the other. I have seen in the earliest churches of that period vestments that Mary had embroidered.

The Apostles themselves lent a hand in preparing the dwellings of the newcomers. They carried to them wood and matting and wicker partitions, and worked hard. The poor were provided with clothing, and even their food was prepared for them, for Lazarus had contributed toward the foundation of a general fund.

The holy women, among whom was the wife of Zacheus, busied themselves in helping the newly arrived women. No one had anything of his own. He that brought something with him gave it up, and he that had nothing, received something. The house of Simon the Leper was crowded with disciples. Simon himself no longer dwelt in it, for he had resigned it to the Community, and he now lived among the brethren. On the flat roof of the

house there was formed, by means of movable wicker partitions, a kind of hall in which was placed an orator's chair. It was reached from outside by steps in the wall. They built everywhere, they put up tents and sheds, they made use of every corner of walls and old buildings. There were also many vacant dwellings both here and in Jerusalem, for numbers of Jews went away after the Crucifixion.

The newly converted and the baptized became so numerous after Pentecost that the Apostles had to negotiate with the Jewish magistrates for procuring suitable dwelling-places for the newcomers. They sent Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Nathanael, and others well known among the Jews, to the magistrates who were assembled, about twenty in number, in a hall over the gate of the women's porch. Three places outside the city and distant from the usual routes were assigned the converts: one to the west of Bethania, between it and Bethphage, where some huts and sheds were already put up; and two others south of Bethania, distant also from the highroads. In exchange for these, the disciples were to vacate the inn on the road outside Bethania, nor should they live permanently or put up at the inn beyond Jerusalem and on the road to Bethlehem, where Mary had stopped before her Purification in the Temple. I saw the magistrates indicating from the Temple the regions named, the deputies carrying back the news to the Community, some parties of the Faithful going thither, and Peter and John pointing out to them sites for building. Supplies of all kinds were transported on asses, and water in great leathern bottles, to the place between Bethania and Bethphage, where there was no water. But when the Christians began to dig a well, water at once gushed forth. I saw Simon of Bethania, who had had a household of his own and understood domestic economy, under an awning near the Pool of Bethesda, and he appeared to be noting down on a roll of parchment the goods and chattels of the people, who had brought with them sheep, goats, doves, and great birds with red beaks and legs. All were distributed to those in need of them, also covers and woolen stuffs for clothing. Admirable order was observed in this distribution. The women received their portion through the hands of women; the men, from men. There were people from the most widely scattered regions, who did not understand one another's language, but who with the greatest love handed over their property for distribution. The Apostles alone understood all. Magdalen and Martha gave up their houses at Bethania to the new converts, and Lazarus delivered over all that he owned to the Community. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea did the same. They assumed the charge of providing for the Community and distributing the alms. But when they were ordained priests, Peter appointed deacons in their place.

