

Preparations for the Pasch

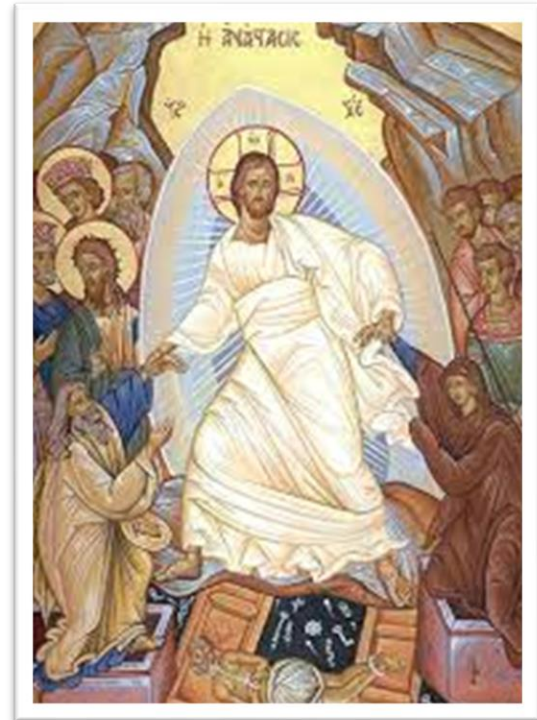
Holy Thursday, the 13th Nisan (29th of March).

Yesterday evening it was that the last great public repast of our Lord and his friends took place in the house of Simon the Leper, at Bethania, and Mary Magdalen for the last time anointed the feet of Jesus with precious ointment. Judas was scandalised upon this occasion, and hastened forthwith to

Jerusalem again to conspire with the high-priests for the betrayal of Jesus into their hands. After the repast, Jesus returned to the house of Lazarus, and some of the Apostles went to the inn situated beyond Bethania. During the night

Nicodemus again came to Lazarus' house, had a long conversation with our Lord, and returned before daylight to Jerusalem, being accompanied part of the way by Lazarus. The disciples had already asked Jesus where he would eat the Pasch. To-day, before dawn, our Lord sent for Peter, James, and John, spoke to them at some length concerning all they had to prepare and order at Jerusalem, and told them that when ascending Mount

Sion, they would meet the man carrying a pitcher of water. They were already well acquainted with this man, for at the last Pasch, at Bethania, it had been he who prepared the meal for Jesus, and this is why St. Matthew says: a certain man. They were to follow him home, and say to him: the Master saith, My time is near at hand, with thee I make the Pasch with my disciples (Matt. 26:18). They were then to be shown the supper-room, and make all necessary preparations. I saw the Apostles ascending towards Jerusalem, along a ravine, to the south of the Temple, and in the



direction of the north side of Sion. On the southern side of the mountain on which the Temple stood, there were some rows of houses; and they walked opposite these houses, following the stream of an intervening torrent. When they had reached the summit of Mount Sion, which is higher than the mountain of the Temple, they turned their steps towards the south, and, just at the beginning of a small ascent, met the man who had been named to them; they followed and spoke to him as Jesus had commanded. He was much gratified by their words, and answered, that a supper had already been ordered to be prepared at his house (probably by Nicodemus), but that he had not been aware for whom, and was delighted to learn that it was for Jesus. This man's name was Heli, and he was the brother-in-law of Zachary of Hebron, in whose house Jesus had in the preceding year announced the death of John the Baptist. He had only one son, who was a Levite, and a friend of St. Luke, before the latter was called by our Lord, and five daughters, all of whom were unmarried. He went up every year with his servants for the festival of the Pasch, hired a room and prepared the Pasch for persons who had no friend in the town to lodge with. This year he had hired a supper-room which belonged to Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. He showed the two Apostles its position and interior arrangement.