

Prayers & Rituals



FOLLOW CHRIST THROUGH
HOLY WEEK



DAILY HOLY WEEK RITUAL
5. THURSDAY in HOLY WEEK

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It is recommended that at least part of every meal time be spent in listening to some reading.
(can be changed according family circumstances)

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1. THE CENACLE OR UPPER ROOM

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THE HOME OF ST. MARK

According to early Christian tradition, the “Upper Room” was in the home of Mary the mother of John Mark. He was the author of the Gospel of Mark (and presumably also the young man who fled naked, leaving behind his linen garment, to escape the authorities when Jesus was arrested in the garden at Gethsemane, an event he recorded in Mark 14:51). Some say it was Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, who owned the building.

The original building was a synagogue (a house of prayer) and later was probably used by the early Jewish Christians. The owner of the house, in which was found the Upper Room of the Last Supper, is not mentioned in Scripture; but he must have been one of the disciples of Our Lord, since Christ bids Peter and John say, “The Master says”.

DISCIPLES MEETING PLACE

This house was a meeting place for the followers of Jesus inside the city walls of Jerusalem. In this building Christ showed Himself after His Resurrection; here took place the election of Matthias to the Apostolate and the sending of the Holy Ghost on the first Pentecost Sunday; here the first Christians assembled for the “breaking of bread” or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in its early format; here Peter and John came when they had given testimony after the cure of the man born lame, and Peter after his libera-



tion from prison came here for refuge after an angel of the Lord released him from prison. Acts 12:12-16 says a maid named Rhoda was so overjoyed at recognizing his voice that she left him knocking at the outer gate while she went to tell the gathered disciples.

COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

Here, perhaps, was the council of the Apostles held (the Council of Jerusalem). It was for a while the only church in Jerusalem, the mother of all churches, known as the Church of the Apostles or of Sion.

The hall was large and furnished as a dining-room. While the term “Cenacle” means “dining room” it refers only to the “Upper Room,” the building contains another site of interest. A niche located on the lower level of the same building is associated by tradition with the burial site of King David, marked by a large monument set up by 12th century Crusaders. The Cenacle is also connected to the house where Virgin Mary lived among the Apostles until her death or dormition, an event celebrated in the nearby Church of the Dormition.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

In 70 A.D. the Roman general Titus suppressed the First Jewish Revolt (66-70 A.D.) by utterly destroying Jerusalem and burning the Temple. The first-century historian Josephus tells us that the destruction reached the farthest corners of the city and was so complete that someone passing by would not know a city ever stood there.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the building was spared during the destruction of Jerusalem, though the Catholic archeologist, who spent several decades (1969-2002) in a monastery in Jerusalem, Fr. Pixner, OSB (1921-2002), thinks it was probably rebuilt right after the war, and claims three walls of that structure are still existing: the North, East and South walls of the present King David’s Tomb. It may even be that the building was partially destroyed and required extensive



THE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY APOSTLES (with the Upper Room and Holy Ghost Room)

JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN SYNAGOGUE (Late First Century)



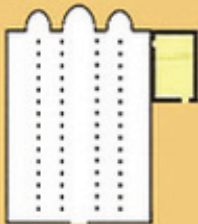
The Judaeo-Christina synagogues, in the late 1st century, later known as the Church of the Holy Apostles.

OCTAGONAL CHURCH & CHURCH OF THE HOLY APOSTLES (382-415)



The Judaeo-Christina synagogues, now known as the Church of the Holy Apostles, next to an octagonal church built by the Emperor Theodosius around 382.

HOLY SION CHURCH (415-1009)



The Church of the Holy Apostles becomes an extension to the Holy Sion Church (415-1009). They are pictured above left, as portrayed in the Madaba mosaic map.

CRUSADER CHURCH OF ST. MARY (1110-1219)



The Church of the Holy Apostles as it was from around 1110 to 1219. It was then incorporated within the newly build Crusader Church. It was destroyed by the Moslems in 1219.

work to restore it—which would be tantamount to rebuilding.

POST-DESTRUCTION ERA

In any case, Fr. Brixner is of the opinion that after this destruction, returning Judaeo-Christians, in the late first century, rebuilt the Judaeo-Christian synagogues on the site they identified with the Cenacle (the Upper Room, where the Last Supper was held), and which was the center of the primitive community that formed around St. James, “the brother of the Lord” (Galatians 1:19) and the first bishop of Jerusalem.

It must be remembered that in those days, Christian meant Catholic (the word Catholic had not yet come into use) and during the first three centuries, due to the intermittent Roman persecution of Christians, it was forbidden to build any Christian churches as places of worship.

The most probable period in which it was built was between 70 and 132. According to the respected Church historian Eusebius, during those years there was a flourishing Judaeo-Christian community in Jerusalem presided over by a series of 13 Judaeo-Christian bishops (Catholic bishops of Jewish descent). Early Church writers identified this Judaeo-Christian synagogues as the Church of the Apostles. At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD) there were anywhere from 390 to 480 synagogues in the city of Jerusalem.

SYNAGOGUE CHURCH?

Why was this ancient Judaeo-Christian synagogues, on Mt. Sion, called the Church of the Apostles?

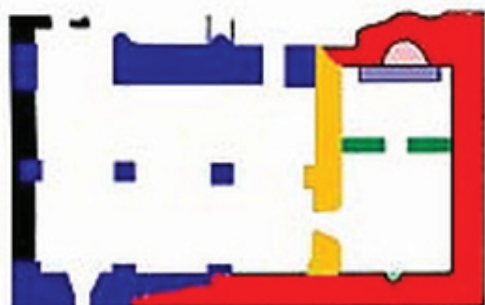
Bishop St. Epiphanius (315-403 A.D.), a native of the Holy Land, transmitted to us the following information: When the Roman emperor Hadrian visited Jerusalem in 130/131 A.D., there was standing on Mt. Sion “a small church of God. It marked the site of the Upper Room, to which the disciples returned from the Mount of Olives after the Lord had been taken up [Acts 1:13]. It had been built on that part of Sion.”

CENACLE

Room of the Last Supper and the Room of the Holy Ghost



0 10 yds



The ancient sanctuary on Mt. Sion known to St. Epiphanius could only have been a Judaeo-Christian synagogue, for the building of Christian “churches” was only made possible after the Roman Emperor Constantine’s Edict of Milan (313 A.D.).

Who built this synagogue-church — already standing on the southwestern hill of Mt. Sion in 130 A.D. — in memory of the place of the Last Supper and the Pentecost event? Some information comes from a tenth-century Patriarch of Alexandria, named Euthychius (896-940 A.D.), who wrote a history of the church based on all the ancient sources that were available to him.

According to Euthychius, the Judaeo-Christians who fled to Pella to escape the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. “returned to Jerusalem in the fourth year of the emperor Vespasian, and built there their church” (Migne, ed., Patrologia Latina, Vol. III, p. 985).

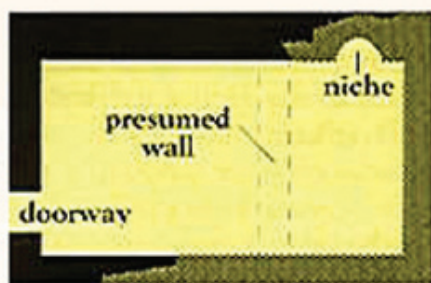
The fourth year of Vespasian was 73 A.D., the year Masada, the last outpost of the Jewish rebellion, fell to the Romans. The Judaeo-Christians returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Simon Bar-Kleopha (Simon, son of Cleophas), who was the second bishop of Jerusalem after James, “the brother of the Lord,” and, like Jesus, a descendant of the royal Davidic family.

The Judaeo-Christians probably built their church, at that time called a synagogue, sometime in the decade after 73 A.D. For its construction, they could have used some of the magnificent stones from Herod’s destroyed Temple.

If that is so, the event may in fact be referred to in one of the apocryphal Odes of Solomon composed about 100 A.D. by a rival sectarian Judaeo-Christian group. The fourth ode begins: “No man can pervert your holy place, O God, nor can he change it, and put it in another place, because [he has] no power over it. Your sanctuary you designed before you made special places.”

CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES

Plan of the First Century Judeo-Christian Synagogue (The Church of the Apostles)



0 5 10yds



The Roman emperor, Theodosius I, built an octagonal church (the “Theodosian Church” or “Holy Sion Church”) alongside the synagogue that was named “Church of the Apostles”. The Theodosian Church, probably started in AD 382, was consecrated by John II, Bishop of Jerusalem in 394. It was visited in 404 by St. Paula of Rome.

Some years later, around 415, Bishop John II enlarged the Holy Sion Church, transforming it into a large rectangular basilica with five naves, always alongside the Church of the Apostles. This building was later destroyed by Persian invaders in 614 AD and shortly after partially rebuilt by patriarch Modestus.

DESTROYED BY MOSLEMS

In 1009 the church was razed to the ground by the Moslems and shortly after replaced by the Crusaders with a five-aisled basilica named “Saint Mary”. When the church was again destroyed in 1219, the section containing the former synagogue, including its upper-floor room (the Cenacle) were spared.

In the 1330s, it passed into the custody of the Franciscan Order of Friars, who maintained the structure until 1552, when the Moslems of the Ottoman Empire took possession of it. After the Franciscan friars’ eviction in 1591, this room was transformed into a mosque.

Christians were not officially allowed to return until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The historical building is currently owned by the State of Israel. The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, which had previously owned the building and sought its return, will have administrative control over the Cenacle itself after the Vatican-Israeli accord.

Today part of the site is taken by the smaller church of the Dormition Abbey (in honor of Our Lady having died there). In this new basilica, it is thought that the Cenacle occupied a portion of two aisles on the right (southern) side of the altar. The Church of the Dormition, the Church of Our Lady, is a new building erected by the Emperor William in



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commemoration of his visit to Jerusalem in 1898. It was completed in 1910. Its design follows that of the Cathedral of Aix la Chapelle.

Since at least the fourth century, the Cenacle, the site of the Last Supper and the descent of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost Sunday, has been a popular Christian pilgrimage site on Mount Sion in Jerusalem. It is well-documented in the narratives of many early pilgrims, such as Egeria, who visited it in 384. The building has experienced numerous cycles of destruction and reconstruction, culminating in the Gothic structure which stands today.'

‘FIGHTING’ OVER THE BUILDING!

In Jerusalem, just outside the Zion Gate of the old city near the crest of Mount Sion, often called Christian Sion, lie the partial remains of an ancient synagogue consisting of a niche, walls, floors, and foundations, incorporated into a building now venerated by both Jews and Christians.

For Jews the site is the traditional location of David’s Tomb (the pseudo-tomb, not the actual tomb) memorialized by a small synagogue on the first floor. Christians commonly regard this site as that of the ancient location of the Upper Room often referred to as the Cenacle or the Coenaculum.

A memorial to this heritage, dating to the 14th century, consists of the reconstructed Room of the Last Supper and the adjoining Chapel of the Holy Spirit, both of which are found on the second floor. Though it is a single building that houses the two memorials, each has a separate entrance.

The formal name of this ancient, Judeo-Christian synagogue, during the second and third centuries, is now unknown. In the fourth and fifth centuries, however, Christians referred to the building in a variety of ways.

Eusebius called it the “Holy Church of God”. St. Cyril of Jerusalem said it was the “Upper Church of the Apostles.” Epiphanius said it was a small “Church of God.” Theodosius said it was Holy Sion, which is the “mater omnium ecclesiarum” or the Mother of all Churches.





With the later construction of the Basilica of Hagia Sion (Holy Sion) in the early fifth century the synagogue became of less significance. For a brief period it served as the repository of the bones of St. Stephen. Later it functioned simply as a side chapel. Centuries later it became known as the Tomb of David, which remains its name to the present day.

For more than a thousand years Mt. Sion was under Christian domination and a place of Christian memorials and churches. During this period, there were times when control of the Holy Places was lost due to Moslem invasions: as was the case with the Persian invasion of 614 and the Islamic occupation of 1009–1099.



The pseudo-Tomb of David, the remnants of this ancient synagogue, remained under Islamic control from 1219, except for the limited Franciscan occupancy of 1335–1551, until taken by the Israelis in 1948. Today it comes under the jurisdiction of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs.

There is no scholarly consensus as to the identity of the original synagogue. Nevertheless, both Christians and Jews relying on the statement by Epiphanius, today claim it as their own.

Writing late in the fourth century, Epiphanius claimed, in chapter 14 of his work *De Mensuris et Ponderibus*, that when the Roman Emperor Hadrian (76-138) visited Jerusalem (around 131/132), a small “Church of God” and “seven synagogues” existed on Mount Sion. He wrote: Epiphanius wrote: “Hadrian... [135 A.D.] found the city entirely raised to the ground and the Temple of God destroyed and tramped upon, with the exception of some houses and a certain small church of the Christians, which had been constructed in that place, in which the disciples, after the Savior was taken up to heaven from Mount Olivet, betaking themselves, mounted to the Cenacle.”

THROUGH PERSECUTIONS

Christians hold that this site is that of the Upper Room as well the location where the Holy Spirit descended upon Our Lady and the Apostles, and



they argue that the present-day remains are those of this small “Church of God”. The Jews claim it as one of seven synagogues of the Jews observed by Hadrian.

The matter remains in scholarly dispute as well and there is no clear consensus of scholarly opinion. Some literary sources and archaeological data support the existence of a Judaeo-Christian synagogue on Mt. Sion in the second century.

On the other hand, the exclusion of Jews from Jerusalem for a time, the Roman persecution of Christians, and the presence of the Roman Tenth Legion on Mt. Sion are arguments against it. However, those who argue against it fail to recognize that the Church managed to exist in hidden pockets throughout the Roman Empire.

The fact that the Romans were occupying the Holy Land does not mean that it is no longer the Holy Land, nor does it change the fact that the site of the Last Supper and Pentecost remains the site no matter what happens in the future. A postponement of religious worship does not change the fact that it was a site of religious worship.

An early account by a pilgrim from Bordeaux, possibly a Judaeo-Christian who visited Jerusalem in 333, referred to the tradition of seven synagogues on Mount Sion. This visitor wrote: “Inside Sion, within the wall, you can see where David had his palace. Seven synagogues were there, but only one is left—the rest have been ‘plowed and sown’ as was said by the prophet Isaias” (Pilgrim of Bordeaux, 592).

ONE ROOM OF TWO? ROOM FOR MORE?

With respect to the Upper Room, the question is—was there but a single upper room put to use by the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth at the time of the Passover? St. Luke, the author of both his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, employs two different Greek words as a variant for Upper Room (Luke 22:12 & Acts 1:13)—

thus leading to conjecture that the rooms of the Last Supper and that of Pentecost, were two different rooms.

These two passages mark events in the roughly eight-week period from the Passover through Pentecost. The Greek word *anágaiōn* refers to the venue of the Last Supper and the Greek word *hupērōiōn* refers to the place where the disciples resided at the time of the Ascension and presumably at Pentecost.

In his Vulgate translation of the New Testament, Jerome rendered these two Greek words by the single Latin word “coenaculum”, or “cenaculum”, meaning dining room which was customarily located on a second floor in Greco-Roman multi-story homes. At times translators render “coenaculum” and “cenaculum” into English as “cenacle”.

In early Christian tradition the location of the Upper Room was the home of Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12). In his Gospel, John Mark, presumably the young man who followed soldiers taking Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest in the Upper City, and escaped naked when in attempting to grab him they got his sleeping garment instead (Mark 14:51), also uses the Greek word *anágaiōn* for Upper Room in reference to the venue of the Last Supper (Mark 14:15).

Below you see a photo of the room that is held to have been the location for the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. It is an adjoining room to that of the Last Supper. It is known as the “The Holy Spirit Room.”

Architectural evidence suggests that this place is older than the “Last Supper” room. The white cenotaph and the cupola above it are later additions made by the Muslims because of the Tomb of David’s present on the first floor (street level).



THE

LAST

SUPPER

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2.

THE LAST SUPPER

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Nothing is said in the Gospel about the events of the daylight hours. There is every reason to think that Jesus passed it in the company of His intimate friends and His family; His mother must have been there for on the day after we find her at the foot of the cross.

The decisive events take place during the evening and all four Evangelists report them with a wealth of detail and in striking similarity. Even St. John, who ordinarily does not dwell upon things which the synoptics have recorded, seems driven by an urge to put down everything he knows, and everything he can remember. Thus we are able to follow Jesus almost hour by hour upon the road which was to be his Passion.

The Passover was the greatest of the Jewish feasts and to understand its meaning and to follow the ritual we must turn to Exodus xii in which its institution by Moses is recorded. During the enslavement in Egypt, Jehovah had smitten the oppressors with the "tenth plague," in which all the first-born sons of the Egyptians were to be killed.

In order that the Angel of Death should spare the Jewish households, the Chosen People were told to mark a sign in the blood of a lamb upon the lintel of their doorways. "Their meat that night must be roasted over the fire, their bread unleavened; wild herbs must be all their seasoning ... And this is to be the manner of your eating it; your loins must be girt, your feet ready shod, and every man's staff in his hand; all must be done in haste. It is the night of the Pasch, the Lord's passing by... You are to observe this day ... generation after generation; a rite never to be abrogated." For seven days the Jews must eat unleavened bread and keep the whole week consecrated to the Lord.

The Jewish tradition observed these rites faithfully and the Talmud had, in a lengthy commentary, the Pesachim, amplified the details: the lamb must be whole, with no bone broken, it must be cooked on an open fire on a spit from wood of the pomegranate; the exact number of cups which might be drunk during the sacred repast and the exact proportions, a third of wine and two of water, which each should contain; the bitter herbs were particularized and minute directions were given for the sauce in which they were steeped. Was this the meal which Jesus and his disciples ate on the Thursday night?

“On the first of the days of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, Where wilt thou have us make ready for thee to eat the paschal meal?” (Matt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7-8.)

The exact date of Last Supper, and its consequent significance, was very much debated in the early Church. Eusebius wrote a commentary on it and it even gave birth to a heresy. We have seen that the great feast day must have been the fifteenth day of Nisan.

The Passover lamb was eaten on the evening of that day. The synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke), however, suggest that the Last Supper which Jesus took with his disciples was the Passover feast, but St. John says plainly that the day of the paschal meal (not the day Jesus ate the meal) was the day on which he died.

According to the synoptics, the Thursday of the Last Supper was the fourteenth day of Nisan and Jesus died on Friday the fifteenth. According to the Fourth Gospel, the Supper took place on the thirteenth and the Crucifixion on the fourteenth.

If we conclude, from the reading of St. John, that the Last Supper was not the Passover feast, it seems we are going against considerable evidence to the contrary from the synoptics (for example Mark 14:12; Mathew 26:17; Luke 22:7; Mark14:17; Mathew 26:20; Luke 22:14-15).

Should we then conclude that it was? St. John himself states that the Pharisees ate the Passover after the death of Jesus (18:28).

From various indications in the synoptics it seems clear that the day when Jesus died was not a holy day when normal activities were proscribed, or Simon the Cyrenean would not have been “coming in from the country” nor could a condemned person be crucified and buried.

We cannot go into all the interpretations in order to force the two versions to a mathematical coincidence, though it may be remarked that St. John, writing long afterward in a Greek community, might well have reckoned his days, as we do, from midnight while the Jews would reckon theirs from sunset.

Thus the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan, although legally the fifteenth day of the month, might be popularly regarded as the fourteenth.

Most modern authorities accept the chronology of St. John, which comes to this, according to the present-day calendar: the Last Supper, when Jesus attended the Passover feast, took place on the evening of Thursday, April 6; the death of Jesus occurred on April 7, the legal day of the Jewish Passover.

In reply to their question, Jesus told two of the disciples, Peter and John, to make the preparations. He said: “Go into the city, find such a man, and tell him, The Master says, My time is near; I and My disciples must keep the paschal feast at thy house.” “And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; it is there you are to make ready for us.” (Matt. 26:18-16; Mark 14:13-15; Luke 22:7-12.)

We do not know who this man was, but doubtless some faithful disciple would put his house at Jesus’ disposal. The sign by which Peter and John were to recognize him—a man “carrying a jar of water”—Mark 14:13; Luke 22:10—would not strike them as inadequate, for it should be remembered that in the East the women always drew the water and a man carrying a pitcher

would be somewhat conspicuous.

The disciples went into the town, probably by the gate near the well of Sloe, found the man and carried out their Master's instruction. "A large upper room" suggests a formal celebration; certainly Jesus would wish to impart solemnity to this occasion, the inner meaning of which he knew so well. He does not appear to have gone to so much trouble at other Passover celebrations; at least, there is no mention of them.

The Christian, so familiar with innumerable representations of the Last Supper in art, finds it difficult to disassociate this Jewish religious feast from the sacrament which it was to institute. For this reason, we are inclined to prefer some of the lesser known representations to the more illustrious, not excluding the famous da Vinci, the best known of all. In some of the minor sculpture of the twelfth century, notably in a tympanum of Charlieu and on a mutilated lintel at St. Gilles-de-Gard, we have a more direct and less romanticized presentation, with a far stronger impact of spiritual significance.

Most Oriental houses today have a large upper room, sometimes lit by a square lantern hanging from the ceiling, which is reserved for guests, especially those who may be staying for several days. Rugs and divans are provided so that they may settle themselves at their ease.

The location of the room where the Last Supper was held has naturally occupied Christian archaeologists. One very old tradition locates it in the upper town, beyond the Tyropeon Bridge, near the southeastern corner of the ramparts.

The whole quarter was destroyed in the siege of 70 AD and we cannot say how accurate was the recollection which, in the third century, caused a small chapel to be built on the spot. During the following century, it was included in the vast Basilica of Holy Zion.

This church was burnt by the Persians in 614 and again by the Saracens in 960 and 1011. It was finally rebuilt by Godfrey de Bouillon during

the Crusades. In the fourteenth century Sancha, wife of Robert of Anjou, the French King of Naples, obtained the right to maintain this holy place from the Sultan of Egypt and put it in charge of the Franciscans, to whom we owe the present-day monument, a large vaulted chamber supported by heavy columns of porphyry with rather ungainly capitals carved with grapes and wheat-ears.

But it is no longer Christian soil. The place where "the mother of all churches once stood," to quote the chronicler William of Tyre, is now a mosque, because the Mohammedans subsequently affirmed, though absolutely without proof, that the same spot was the burial place of David, who as Nebi Daoud is venerated in Islam. And so, at the end of a long quiet garden, its walls covered with trailing vines, where tall red cypresses lift their heads to the sun, an old Arab in a turban admits the Christian pilgrim to the place where perhaps Christ said: "This is My Body! This is My Blood!"

At sunset, on this day about half past five, the feast would have begun. The guests would be reclining around the table. The old custom of eating the Passover with the tunic worn as though ready for a journey seems to have fallen into disuse by the time of Christ. They would thank God for the wine and for the day, then the Passover dinner began. The chapter of the Talmud called the Pesachim was composed about 150, and probably the usage in Jesus' day was very much the same as those given in it.

The unleavened bread was dipped in a red sauce called haroseth. Two cups of wine were solemnly drunk, with sips of salt water in between, in memory of the tears shed in Egypt. Psalm 113, which tells the story of the Exodus and the division of the waters of the Red Sea, was then chanted.

Then the lamb was eaten with the "wild herbs," those sharply-flavored aromatics, marjoram, bay, thyme and basil, which are still eaten with mutton in Turkey and Greece. Two more ritual cups of wine were drunk, the last being called

“the cup of benediction” because to it was sung the Hallel, the famous song of thanksgiving, made up of four Psalms (113-116):

“Not to us, Lord, not to us the glory; let thy name alone be honored; thine the merciful, thine the faithful ... Our God is a God that dwells in heaven ... The heathen have silver idols and golden, gods which the hands of man have fashioned ... Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, let all the nations of the world do him honor. Abundant has his mercy been towards us; the Lord remains faithful to his word for ever.” Psalm 17 contains an allusion to the Messiah which the Apostles must have chanted with special fervor: “Blessed be the living Lord who is my refuge.”

The Passover was a joyful feast, “as delectable as the olive,” says the Talmud and the chant of the Hallel lifted the roofs. But in the heart of Jesus a deep sorrow pervaded the joy. “I have longed and longed to share this paschal meal with you before my passion; I tell you, I shall not eat it again, till it finds its fulfillment in the kingdom of God” (Luke 22:15-16).

This Last Supper was to be his supreme instruction to the faithful and he began it with a significant gesture.

“And now, rising from supper, He laid His garments aside, took a towel, and put it about Him; and then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples, wiping them with the towel that girded Him. So, when He came to Simon Peter, Peter asked Him, ‘Lord, is it for thee to wash my feet?’

Jesus answered him, ‘It is not for thee to know, now, what I am doing; but thou wilt understand it afterwards.’ Peter said to Him, ‘I will never let Thee wash my feet!’ and Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash thee, it means thou hast no companionship with Me!’ ‘Then, Lord,’ said Peter, ‘wash my hands and my head too, not only my feet!’” (John 13:4-9) .

Once again Peter’s ardent, impetuous character, so very much of a piece through the Gospel

record, is sketched in a few brief sentences. “Do you understand what it is I have done to you?” asked Jesus. “You hail me as the Master, and the Lord; and you are right, it is what I am. Why then, if I have washed your feet, I who am the Master and the Lord, you in your turn ought to wash each other’s feet; I have been setting you an example, which will teach you in your turn to do what I have done for you” (John xiii, 12-15).

One of the most moving parts of the Catholic Office for Holy Week is when, on Maundy Thursday, the officiating prelate—the Pope himself in the Sistine Chapel—kneels to wash the feet of the twelve poor men who symbolize the Apostles.

Jesus tried, by this dramatic gesture, finally to break the shell of pride and envy, the matrix of the human creature, which stifles even the best of us. When the Passover solemnities were finished, the meal proceeded more informally with the guests reclining upon the litters which the Greeks had brought into general usage.

There would naturally be competition for the place next to Jesus and inevitably a dispute arose as to who was most entitled to it, who was the chief of the Twelve. Again Jesus had to call them to order.

“The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them ... With you it is not to be so; no difference is to be made, among you, between the greatest and the youngest of all, between him who commands and him who serves ... You are the men who have kept to my side in my hours of trial: and, as my Father has allotted a kingdom to me, so I allot to you a place to eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; you shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Luke 22:24-30; Mark 10:35-45; Matthew 20:20-28.)

The night had fallen: they had lit the little clay lamps in the candelabras. It was the night of Judas.

We wonder what he was thinking, there among the others who knew nothing whatever of his

doings. He was probably infuriated by those words which he understood only too well—"they shall be last who were first"—and consumed with anxiety to finish what he had begun. Twice Jesus had made allusions which he alone understood.

While he was washing the disciples' feet he said: "You are not all clean." A few minutes later he referred to a scripture which should be fulfilled: "The man who shared my bread has lifted his heel to trip me up" (John 13:11-18). Later, during the meal, he spoke even more plainly: "Believe me, one of you is to betray me."

The disciples were appalled and looked at each other, each asking: "Lord, is it I?" He did not reply directly, but gave what was perhaps a final warning. "The Son of Man goes on his way, as the scripture foretells of him; but woe upon that man by whom the Son of Man is to be betrayed; better for that man if he had never been born."

Then Judas, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps in bravado, asked in his turn, "Is it I?" There was perhaps a slight gesture of reply only visible to the questioner, or that murmured familiar response, common among the Jews, the answer Moses gave to Pharaoh (Exodus 10:29): "Thy own lips have said it!" (Matthew 26:20-25).

In the triclinium, as we can see at Pompeii, the guests reclined on three divans arranged round the table, leaving the fourth side free for the service.

The center place at the bottom was the seat of honor; that to the right of it was called "the bosom of the father" because, since the guests reclined on the left elbow, the slightest move from the person in that place brought him toward the breast of the giver of the feast.

This place was occupied by John, the beloved disciple. Peter was probably on Jesus's left. Judas was probably at the head of one of the other groups; as one of the stewards he would need to go in and out without inconveniencing anybody.

With growing alarm, the disciples looked at one another. John—he never names himself in his Gospel, but the identification is unmistakable—was leaning against his Master's breast, and, prompted by Peter, asked: "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered: "It is the man to whom I give this piece of bread which I am dipping in the dish." And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot (John 13:23-26).

In St. Matthew's version, Jesus chooses a different method to point out the traitor. "The man who has put his hand into the dish with me will betray me" (21:23). Both versions refer to customs still observed at table in the East.

We wonder whether this gesture was a last attempt on the part of Jesus to bring back the wretched Judas to his side. But there are times when the spirit is so full of violence and resentment that a friendly gesture, instead of soothing, plunges the tortured soul more deeply into its furnace of hate.

"The morsel once given, Satan entered into him; and Jesus said to him, Be quick on thy errand. None of those who sat there could understand the drift of what he said; some of them thought, since Judas kept the common purse, that Jesus was saying to him, 'Go and buy what we need for the feast!', or bidding him give some alms to the poor. He, as soon as he received the morsel, had gone out; and now it was night" (John 13:27-30).

It was night, the immediate evocation of the eye witness who saw the door open upon the terrace and the traitor hastening in the darkness toward his doom.

No conscious artist could have written with greater literary effect; and, beyond its lightning visualization of the scene, the mind calls up a vision of that more impenetrable darkness into which this man, caught up in a monstrous destiny yet impelled by his own choke, is plunged forever, because he confirmed the rejection of Christ.

Toward the end of the supper a new rite, unknown to the Mosaic Law, was inaugurated by Jesus in words and gestures by which the tragedy so soon to come was explained. The synoptics report it with only very slight variations. "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body. Then he took a cup, and offered thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink, all of you, of this; for this is my blood, of the new testament, shed for many, to the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20)

No Christian can read these words without feeling the presence of Christ living. When Christ instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, it may be assumed that when he said, "This is my body," the Apostles must have recalled to mind that strange earlier discourse about the Bread of Life which they had found so difficult at the time, which took place at Capernaum (John chapter 6).

"If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever. And now, what is this bread which I am to give? It is My flesh, given for the life of the world." There is no question of any magical interpretation of those words; the moral and spiritual sense is strongly emphasized.

Those who partake of the Bread of Life are those who listen to the Father and hear his words, those who believe in Jesus. Spiritual renewal is the essential preliminary to union with God, and the Apostles cannot have forgotten this condition, so often reiterated, when Jesus repeated his strange words once again: "My flesh is real food, My blood is real drink. He who eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, lives continually in Me, and I in him."

The doctrine of the Catholic Church is that the Sacrament of the Eucharist derives from the actions and the words of Christ at the Last Supper. It affirms that the body of Christ is present—not in the bread and in the wine, which is the Lutheran position—but under the appearance of

the material species, the reality has been miraculously transformed into the substance of God himself.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians, written in 57 AD, says: "So it is the Lord's death that you are heralding, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, until he comes. And therefore, if anyone eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, he will be held to account for the Lord's body and blood. A man must examine himself first, and then eat of that bread and drink of that cup; he is eating and drinking damnation to himself if he eats and drinks unworthily, not recognizing the Lord's body for what it is" (I Corinthians 11:26-29).

LAST TEACHING; LAST PRAYER

When the meal was over, the Jews were accustomed to linger and talk, not, as the Romans did, as an excuse to go on drinking, but solely for the pleasure of talking. St. Mark and St. Matthew do not give us anything of this last discourse, considering, no doubt, that it repeated only what Jesus had said before, which they had already recorded. St. Luke gives us only a little, in very few verses (22:31-38). But St. John devotes a whole series of chapters to it (12:3-17:26) and it is so brilliantly recorded that here, more than anywhere else in his Gospel, do we get the feeling of a direct testimony, a supremely cherished recollection.

The subject of the discourse is familiar and oft repeated but in this particular hour, speaking to those nearest to him, Jesus found words of the most poignant tenderness. "It is only for a short time that I am with you, my children." To those who interrupted him with questions, Thomas, Philip and Jude, he replied patiently. The poor men showed plainly that they had little idea of the real meaning of the tragedy in which they were involved. To Peter, who, with his usual impetuosity and a certain presumption, asked: "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I am ready to lay down my life for thy sake," Jesus answered, half sadly, half ironically: "Believe me, by cock-crow thou wilt thrice disown me."

Little by little, the tension grows. We feel the dramatic conflict between Jesus and these men, asking all too human questions, unable to lift their eyes from the ground, and demanding tangible signs. "Where art thou going?" "We do not know where thou art going; how are we to know the way there?"—while another even asked: "Lord, let us see the Father." And Jesus was already so far away from their level, almost drawn up into the region whence he came and whose mysteries he now sought for the last time to explain.

This last discourse is indeed a summary, in the most sublime words, of everything he had been teaching for more than two years. "I am the way; I am truth and life; nobody can come to the Father, except through me. . . . I am the true vine, and it is my Father who tends it. The branch that yields no fruit in me he cuts away; . . .

"If a man does not live on in me, he can only be like the branch that is cast off and withers away; such a branch is picked up and thrown into the fire, to burn there."

He stresses the vital role of faith. "Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me . . . whatever request you make of the Father in my name, I will grant."

And, above all, he enjoins them once again to show charity, love is the universal Law. And, though so particularly the Christian virtue, it would become so strong and so beautiful that the pagans themselves would acknowledge it: "I have a new commandment to give you that you are to love one another; that your love for one another is to be like the love I have borne you."

But behind the moving, comforting words is the shadow of a terrifying presentiment, sometimes of triumph and glory, sometimes of unparalleled suffering, and as awe-inspiring in the one guise as in the other.

The men who listened to these words, if they

failed to understand them could not have failed to respond in fear and disquiet.

"Now the Son of Man has achieved his glory, and in his glory God is exalted. . . . I am going away. . . . If you really loved me, you would be glad to hear that I am on my way to my Father. . . . Do not let your heart be distressed. . . . It is only a little while now before the world is to see me no more. . . . I have no longer much time for converse with you; one is coming, who has power over the world, but no hold over me."

He spoke even more plainly than this, he tried to bring home to them the lot that awaited them in the world.

"They will persecute you just as they have persecuted me. . . . They will forbid you the synagogue; nay, the time is coming when anyone who puts you to death will claim that he is performing an act of worship to God."

But the picture he painted was not altogether without consolation; from the darkness of the terrible prophecies burst forth a swelling, conquering light. "I will not leave you friendless. . . . Peace is my bequest to you, and the peace which I will give you is mine to give. . . . This is the greatest love a man can show, that he should lay down his life for his friends."

More than consolation was given to the eleven anxious men who sat there listening; the most stupendous of all promises, the promise of the Resurrection: "After a little while, you will see me no longer; and again after a little while you will have sight of me . . ."

And the promise of the Holy Spirit, who will make all things plain, who will fill their souls with light and will complete, in the order of knowledge, what has been gained through the power of love: "He who is to befriend you, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send on my account, will in his turn make everything plain, and recall to your minds everything I have said to you."

Having said all he could to his followers on earth, Jesus, more and more withdrawn into the supernatural, addressed himself directly to his Father in heaven. This “sacerdotal prayer” is certainly the supreme mystical passage of the entire Gospel, for in it the living God speaks to the unseen God directly and, as it were, face to face.

“Father, the time has come; give glory now to thy Son, that thy Son may give glory to thee. Thou hast put him in authority over all mankind, to bring eternal life to all those thou hast entrusted to him. Eternal life is knowing thee, who art the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. . . .

:I have made thy name known to the men whom thou hast entrusted to me, chosen out of the world. . . . It is for these I pray. . . . I am remaining in the world no longer, but they remain in the world, while I am on my way to thee. Holy Father, keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me, that they may be one, as we are one. . . . that my joy may be theirs. . . . It is not only for them that I pray; I pray for those who are to find faith in me through their word; that they may all be one; that they too, may be one in us, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee. . . .

“This, Father, is my desire, that all those whom thou hast entrusted to me may be with me where I am, so as to see my glory, thy gift made to me, in that love which thou didst bestow upon me before the foundation of the world. . . . that the love thou hast bestowed upon me may dwell in them, and I, too, may dwell in them” (John 17).

There was no more. The time had come to leave that place and go to the Mount of Olives where they were expected to stay. He had just told them that a struggle was at hand when a sword would be more useful than a garment and as usual, taking his words in their most literal sense, they assured him that they were well armed: “Here are two swords.”

“That is enough,” he said, and, as Cyril of Alexandria suggested, he must have smiled in

pity as he said it, the ironical smile of the supernatural being who had plumbed the depths of sorrow and misunderstanding but who could draw from his sad knowledge not the bitterness or the savagery of the misanthrope, but the just comprehension of a greater love.

He went out. From its situation in the highest part of the town the house where the Last Supper was held must have given a complete view of the city.

Close by was the High Priest’s palace; to the left, Herod’s, flanked by the gardens of Gethsemane; and opposite, beyond the shadow of the Tyropeon, beyond Ophel and Sion at the foot of the Temple, arose the massive Tower of Antonia, the symbol of humiliation. J

Jesus, in a glance around, could count the three “stages” of his “trial.” But Golgotha would not be visible; it lay behind the square block of the Tower of David. Over the sleeping town shone the bright moon of the month of Nisan, the full moon of the Passover, “blessed in that it hath delivered us.” A burning brazier marked the watchtower of Phazael, and somewhere, in a hidden Temple police trap, Judas also kept watch.

The AGONY in the GARDEN



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3. THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

**Taken from the Mystical City of God
by the Venerable Mary of Agreda**

After the wonderful mysteries, which our Savior Jesus had celebrated in the Cenacle, the Thursday night of His Last Supper having already advanced some hours, He chose to go forth to that dreadful battle of His suffering and death, by which the Redemption was to be accomplished.

The Lord then rose to depart from the hall of the miraculous feast and Mary also Mary left her retreat in order to meet Him on the way. At this face to face meeting of the Prince of eternity and of the Queen, a sword of sorrow pierced the heart of Son and Mother, inflicting a pang of grief beyond all human and angelic thought.

The sorrowful Mother threw Herself at the feet of Jesus, adoring Him as her true God and Redeemer. The Lord, looking upon Her with a majesty divine, spoke to Her only these words: "My Mother, I shall be with thee in tribulation; let us accomplish the will of the eternal Father and the salvation of men."

The great Queen offered herself as a sacrifice with her whole heart and asked his blessing. Having received this she returned to her retirement.

The owner of the house, who was present at this meeting, moved by a divine impulse, offered his house and all that it contained to the Mistress of Heaven, asking her to make use of all that was his during her stay in Jerusalem; and the Queen accepted his offer with humble thanks.

Our Lord left the house of the Cenacle with all the men, who had been present at the mysteri-

ous Supper; and soon many of them dispersed in the different streets in order to attend to their own affairs.

Followed by His twelve Apostles, the Lord directed His steps toward mount Olivet outside and close to the eastern walls of Jerusalem. Judas, alert in his treacherous solicitude for the betrayal of his divine Master, conjectured that Jesus intended to pass the night in prayer as was his custom.

This appeared to him a most opportune occasion for delivering His Master into the hands of his fellow conspirators, the Scribes and the Pharisees. Having taken this dire resolve, he lagged behind and permitted the Master and His Apostles to proceed.

Unnoticed by the latter he lost them from view and departed in all haste to his own ruin and destruction. Within him was the turmoil of sudden fear and anxiety, interior witnesses of the wicked deed he was about to commit. Driven on in the stormy hurricane of thoughts raised by his bad conscience, he arrived breathless at the house of the high priests.

On the way it happened, that Lucifer, perceiving the haste of Judas in procuring the death of Jesus Christ, and (as I have related in chapter the tenth), fearing that after all Jesus might be the true Messiah, came toward him in the shape of a very wicked man, a friend of Judas acquainted with the intended betrayal. In this shape Lucifer could speak to Judas without being recognized.

He tried to persuade him that this project of selling his Master did at first seem advisable on account of the wicked deeds attributed to Jesus; but that, having more naturally considered the matter, he did not now deem it advisable to deliver Him over to the priests and pharisees; for Jesus was not so bad as Judas might imagine; nor did He deserve death; and besides He might free Himself by some miracles and involve his betrayer into great difficulties.

In the meanwhile our divine Lord with the eleven Apostles was engaged in the work of our salvation and the salvation of those who were scheming his death. Unheard of and wonderful contest between the deepest malice of man and the unmeasurable goodness and charity of God!

If this stupendous struggle between good and evil began with the first man, it certainly reached its highest point in the death of the Repairer; for then good and evil stood face to face and exerted their highest powers: human malice in taking away the life and honor of the Creator and Redeemer, and his immense charity freely sacrificing both for men.

Our Savior pursued his way across the torrent of Cedron (John 18, 1) to mount Olivet and entered the garden of Gethsemani. Then He said to all the Apostles: "Wait for Me, and seat yourselves here while I go a short distance from here to pray (Matthew 26:36); do you also pray, in order that you may not enter into temptation" (Luke 22:40).

The divine Master gave them advice, in order that they might be firm in the temptations, of which He had spoken to them at the Supper: that all of them should be scandalized on account of what they should see Him suffer that night, that Satan would assail them to sift and stir them up by his false suggestions; for the Pastor (as prophesied) was to be illtreated and wounded and the sheep were to be dispersed (Zacharias 13:7).

Then the Master of life, leaving the band of eight Apostles at that place and taking with Him saint Peter, saint John, and saint James, retired to another place, where they could neither be seen nor heard by the rest (Mark 14, 33). Being with the three Apostles He raised his eyes up to the eternal Father confessing and praising Him as was his custom; while interiorly He prayed in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zacharias, permitting death to approach the most innocent of men and commanding the sword of divine justice to be unsheathed over the Shepherd and

descend upon the Godman with all its deathly force. In this prayer Christ our Lord offered Himself anew to the eternal Father in satisfaction of his justice for the rescue of the human race; and He gave consent, that all the torments of his Passion and Death be let loose over that part of his human being, which was capable of suffering.

From that moment He suspended and strained whatever consolation or relief would otherwise overflow from the impassable to the passable part of his being, so that in this dereliction his passion and sufferings might reach the highest degree possible. The eternal Father granted these petitions and approved this total sacrifice of the sacred humanity.

This prayer was as it were the floodgate through which the rivers of his suffering were to find entrance like the resistless onslaught of the ocean, as was foretold by David (Ps. 68, 2). And immediately He began to be sorrowful and feel the anguish of his soul and therefore said to the Apostles: "My soul is sorrowful unto death" (Mark 14, 34). He threw himself with his divine face upon the ground and prayed to the eternal Father: "Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from Me" (Matth. 24, 38).

This prayer Christ our Lord uttered, though He had come down from heaven with the express purpose of really suffering and dying for men; though He had counted as naught the shame of his Passion, had willingly embraced it and rejected all human consolation; though He was hastening with most ardent love into the jaws of death, to affronts, sorrows and afflictions; though He had set such a high price upon men, that He determined to redeem them at the shedding of his life-blood.

This agony of Christ our Savior grew in proportion to the greatness of his charity and the certainty of his knowledge, that men would persist in neglecting to profit by his Passion and Death (Luke 22, 44).

His agony increased to such an extent, that

great drops of bloody sweat were pressed from Him, which flowed to the very earth. Although this prayer was uttered subject to a condition and failed in regard to the reprobate who fell under this condition; yet He gained thereby a greater abundance and secured a greater frequency of favors for mortals.

Through it the blessings were multiplied for those who placed no obstacles, the fruits of the Redemption were applied to the saints and to the just more abundantly, and many gifts and graces, of which the reprobates made themselves unworthy, were diverted to the elect.

The human will of Christ, conforming itself to that of the Divinity, then accepted suffering for each respectively: for the reprobate, as sufficient to procure them the necessary help, if they would make use of its merits, and for the predestined, as an efficacious means, of which they would avail themselves to secure their salvation by cooperating with grace. Thus was set in order, and as it were realized, the salvation of the mystical body of his holy Church, of which Christ the Lord was the Creator and Head.

The Lord returned third time to his Apostles and finding them asleep spoke to them: "Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough: the hour is come ; behold the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go. Behold he that will betray Me is at hand (Mark 14, 41). Such were the words of the Master of holiness to the three most privileged Apostles; He was unwilling to reprehend them more severely than in this most meek and loving manner.

Being oppressed, they did not know what to answer their Lord, as Scripture says (Mark 14, 40). They arose and Jesus went with them to join the other eight disciples. He found them likewise overcome and oppressed by their great sorrow and fallen asleep.

The Master then gave orders, that all of them together, mystically forming one body with Him their Head, should advance toward the enemies, thereby teaching them the power of mutual and

perfect unity for overcoming the demons and their followers and for avoiding defeat by them. For a triple cord is hard to tear, as says Ecclesiastes (4, 12), and he that is mighty against one, may be overcome by two, that being the effect of union.

The Lord again exhorted all the Apostles and forewarned them of what was to happen. Already the confused noise of the advancing band of soldiers and their helpmates began to be heard. Our Savior then proceeded to meet them on the way, and, with incomparable love, magnanimous courage and tender piety prayed interiorly:

“O sufferings longingly desired from my inmost soul, ye pains, wounds, affronts, labors, afflictions and ignominious death, come, come, come quickly, for the fire of love, which burns for the salvation of men, is anxious to see you meet the Innocent one of all creatures. Well do I know your value, I have sought, desired, and solicited you and I meet you joyously of my own free will; I have purchased you by my anxiety in searching for you and I esteem you for your merits. I desire to remedy and enhance your value and raise you to highest dignity. Let death come, in order that by my accepting it without having deserved it I may triumph over it and gain life for those who have been punished by death for their sins (Osee 13:14). I give permission to my friends to forsake Me; for I alone desire and am able to enter into this battle and gain for them triumph and victory” (Isaias 53:3).

During these words and prayers of the Author of life Judas advanced in order to give the signal upon which he had agreed with his companions (Matth. 26, 48), namely the customary, but now feigned kiss of peace, by which they were to distinguish Jesus as the One whom they should single out from the rest and immediately seize.

These precautions the unhappy disciple had taken, not only out of avarice for the money and hatred against his Master, but also, on account of the fear with which he was filled. For he dreaded the inevitable necessity of meeting

Him and encountering Him in the future, if Christ was not put to death on this occasion. Such a confusion he feared more than the death of his soul, or the death of his divine Master, and, in order to forestall it, he hastened to complete his treachery and desired to see the Author of life die at the hands of his enemies.

The traitor then ran up to the meekest Lord, and, as a consummate hypocrite hiding his hatred, he imprinted on his countenance the kiss of peace, saying: “God save Thee, Master.”

By this so treacherous act the perdition of Judas was matured and God was justified in withholding his grace and help.

On the part of the unfaithful disciple, malice and temerity reached their highest degree; for, interiorly denying or disbelieving the uncreated and created wisdom by which Christ must know of his treason, and ignoring his power to destroy him, he sought to hide his malice under the cloak of the friendship of a true disciple; and all this for the purpose of delivering over to such a frightful and cruel death his Creator and Master, to whom he was bound by so many obligations. In this one act of treason he committed so many and such formidable sins, that it is impossible to fathom their immensity; for he was treacherous, murderous, sacrilegious, ungrateful, inhuman, disobedient, false, lying, impious and unequalled in hypocrisy; and all this was included in one and the same crime perpetrated against the person of God made man.

CAIPHAS & ANNAS



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4. CHARACTERS OF THE PASSION: ANNAS & CAIPHAS

from devotiontoourlady.com

ANNAS

Annas, son of Seth, was born around 23 BC. His date of death is unknown—probably around AD 40. He was appointed by the Roman legate Quirinius as the first High Priest of the newly formed Roman province of Iudaea in AD 6; just after the Romans had deposed Archelaus, Ethnarch of Judaea, thereby putting Judaea directly under Roman rule.

Annas officially served as High Priest for ten years (AD 6–15), when at the age of 36 he was deposed by the procurator Gratus. Yet while having been officially removed from office, he remained as one of the nation's most influential political and social individuals, aided greatly by the use of his five sons and his son-in-law as puppet High Priests.

Annas was still called “high priest” even after his dismissal, along with Caiaphas (Luke 3:2). He also may have been acting as president of the Sanhedrin, or a coadjutor of the high priest.

PLOT TO KILL LAZARUS OF BETHANY

The involvement of the family of Annas may be implied in the plot to kill Lazarus of Bethany in John 12:10.

Although Annas is not mentioned by name in the plot to kill Lazarus, several 19th-century writers considered that there may be a concealed reference to Annas in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus which points at a “Rich man” with five sons. If it is considered that rich

man dressed in purple and fine linen (cf. Exodus 28:8) represents Caiaphas, as figurehead of the Sadducees, then Annas is intended by the “father” in Luke 16:27, and the “five brothers” Luke 16:28 are Annas’ five sons.

In support of this is the coincidence that the father and five brothers who will not be convinced even if the parable Lazarus is raised from the dead (Luke 16:31) predict that Caiaphas, Annas, and the five sons of Annas would not believe and plotted to have the real Lazarus killed when he was raised (John 12:10).

ANNAS ACCORDING THE MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD

by the Venerable Mary of Agreda

Having been taken prisoner and firmly bound, the most meek Lamb Jesus was dragged from the garden to the house of the high priests, first to the house of Annas (John 18, 13). They dragged Him bound and chained under continued ill-treatment to the house of Annas, before whom they presented Him as a malefactor worthy of death.

It was the custom of the Jews to present thus bound those criminals who merited capital punishment; and they now made use of this custom in regard to Jesus, in order to intimate his sentence even before the trial.

The sacrilegious priest Annas seated himself in proud and arrogant state on the platform or tribunal of a great hall. Immediately Lucifer placed himself at his side with a multitude of evil spirits.

Imperiously and haughtily the highpriest asked Him about His disciples (John 18), and what doctrine He was preaching and teaching. This question was put merely for the purpose of misinterpreting his answer, if Jesus should utter any word that afforded such a chance.

But the Master of holiness, who is the Guide and the Corrector of the most wise (Wisdom 7:15),

offer to the eternal Father the humiliation of being presented as a criminal before the highpriest and of being questioned by him as a prevaricator and author of a false doctrine.

Our Redeemer with an humble and cheerful countenance answered the question as to his doctrines: “I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort: and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me? ask these, who have heard what I have spoken unto them: behold they know what I have said.”

As the doctrine of Christ our Lord came from his eternal Father, He spoke for it and defended its honor. He referred them to his hearers, both because those by whom He was now surrounded, would not believe Him and wished to distort all He should say, and because the truth and force of his teachings recommended and forced themselves upon the minds of his greatest enemies by their own excellence.

Concerning the Apostles He said nothing, because it was not necessary on this occasion and because were not reflecting much credit upon their Master by their present conduct.

Though his answer was so full of wisdom and so well suited to the question, yet one of the servants of the highpriest rushed up with raised hand and audaciously struck the venerable and sacred face of Jesus, saying: “Answerest Thou the high priest so?”

The Lord accepted this boundless injury, praying for the one who had inflicted it; and holding Himself ready, if necessary, to turn and offer the other cheek for a second stroke, according to the doctrine He had himself inculcated (Matth. 5, 39).

But in order that the atrocious and daring offender might not shamelessly boast of his wickedness, the Lord replied with great tranquillity and meekness: “If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; if well, why strikest thou Me?”

O sight most astounding to the supernal spirits! Since this is He, at the mere sound of whose voice the foundations of the heavens tremble and ought to tremble and the whole firmament is shaken!

CAIAPHAS

Caiaphas was the Roman-appointed Jewish high priest between 18 and 37 AD., best known for his role in the trial of Jesus. His full name was Yosef Bar Kayafa, which translates as Joseph, son of Caiaphas.

A member of the party of the Sadducees, Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas, a previous high priest who had also succeeded in placing several of his own sons in the office. Caiaphas, however, held the position much longer than his immediate predecessors, probably due to his skill in pleasing his Roman overlords while maintaining a degree of order among the various religious factions in Jerusalem.

The Gospels of Matthew and John (though not those of Mark and Luke) mention Caiaphas in connection with the trial of Jesus. According to these accounts, Jesus was arrested by Temple guards and taken by night either to the home of Annas (according to the Gospel of John) or directly to Caiaphas (in the Gospel of Matthew), where he was questioned and accused of blasphemy.

Caiaphas declared Him guilty and worthy of death for this crime. From the home of Caiaphas, Jesus was taken to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, where he was convicted of the charge of sedition against Rome, the crime under which he was sentenced to crucifixion.

Caiaphas also figures in the trial of the apostles Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, where he was overruled after the Pharisaic leader Gamaliel opposed his plan to punish the apostles. He retained his position as high priest until shortly after Pontius Pilate was recalled to Rome.

AARON, THE FIRST HIGH PRIEST

The high priest's office carried great prestige and considerable political power in ancient Israel. Traditionally originating with Aaron, the brother of Moses, it had for many centuries been occupied by the descendants of Zadok, one of the high priests appointed by King David. Under Greek rule in the Second Temple period, the office became a political tool, first of the Greek rulers and then of the Hasmonean kings.

During the period of national independence under the Maccabees, the high priests ruled with princely authority, combining the priestly office with that of the king and leading to allegations of corruption. The Pharisees arose in part as an opposition to the priesthood of this period, as did the Essenes.

The advent of Roman power brought an end to the combination of royal and priestly power under the Hasmoneans. The high-priesthood ceased to be a hereditary office, nor did its occupant serve for life, as he had in previous times. Indeed, high priests were appointed and removed with great frequency.

Herod the Great nominated no less than six high priests. His son Archelaus appointed two during his much briefer reign. After this, the Romans governed Judea through a procurator and appointed the high priest directly, causing the office to be seen by some as a puppet of the Romans. The high priest was also the presiding officer of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious council in Jerusalem.

Deposed high priests seem to have retained the title, and to have continued to exercise certain functions, as is reported in the case of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas himself had been high priest c. 6-15 AD and was the head of a family which produced five high priests during the Herodian period (Josephus, "Ant." xx. 9, § 1), not counting Caiaphas, who was his daughter's husband.

Caiaphas was the last of the four high priests appointed by the Roman procurator Valerius

Gratus between 15 and 26 A.D. His appointment is generally dated to 18. He remained in his position during the administration of Pontius Pilate, holding his office until c. 36 A.D., when he was removed by Vitellius, the Roman legate of Syria.

His administration thus lasted about 18 years, a long term when compared with that of most other high priests of the Roman period. Since he served at the pleasure of the Romans, his relative longevity of his office was probably due to his submissiveness to the policy of the Roman government, which made him unpopular among the more patriotic elements such as the Pharisees, the Essenes, and the Zealots.

He belonged to the party of the Sadducees and probably shared their fondness for Hellenistic culture, as did his father-in-law Annas and his wife's brother Annas the Younger (Josephus, Ant., XX, ix. 1).

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

One of the challenges Caiaphas had to deal with was the problem of would-be Messias causing disturbances that could cause the Romans to react with violent repression.

In John 11, Caiaphas considers with other members of the Sanhedrin what to do about Jesus, whose influence is spreading. They worry that if they "let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation."

Messianic movements had long been considered a threat to the public order, and the above scenario implies that Jesus had developed a significant enough following among the Jews to represent a threat. A high priest who was incapable of controlling the messianic impulse to restore Israel's national sovereignty could not expect to remain in office long.

Caiaphas quickly made the appropriate political calculation, arguing, apparently against those who supported taking no action against Jesus: "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish" (John 11:49-50). John indicates that from this point onward, Caiaphas and his supporters looked for a means to apprehend Jesus and kill him.

An attempt to do deal with Jesus is also described in John 7, where Jesus is brought before the "chief priests and the Pharisees," apparently in a meeting of the Sanhedrin. Here, however, the faction opposed to Jesus does not prevail, as the majority agrees with the Pharisee Nicodemus that Jesus had done nothing worthy of condemnation (John 7:45-53).

The opportunity Caiaphas had sought finally presents itself after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in which it became obvious that Jesus was presenting himself as the Messiah, the returning king of the Jews.

Jesus also took the dramatic step of violently overturning the money-changers' tables in the Temple courtyard, an act in direct defiance of Caiaphas' authority, especially during the Passover festival, when the high priest had a very visible role.

Meanwhile, a disagreement between Jesus and his disciples over the use of money led to Judas Iscariot's going to the "chief priests," probably meaning Caiaphas and his associates, to denounce Jesus (Mark 14:4-10). With Judas' aid, Jesus was soon apprehended at the Garden of Gethsemane, as the disciples he had posted as guards slept instead of keeping watch.

CAIAPHAS AT JESUS' TRIAL

The Gospels present differing accounts about the trial of Jesus and Caiaphas' role in it. Caiaphas is not mentioned in Luke's or Mark's account, while in the Gospel of John the trial is portrayed as a late-night interrogation conducted mainly by Caiaphas' father-in-law. In the

Gospel of Matthew, it appears as a much larger event, but still conducted at irregular hours.

The Gospel of John indicates that the Temple guards who arrested Jesus brought him to the home of Annas. Jesus is also questioned by Annas, who is confusingly called “high priest,” probably referring not to his current role but to his former office. When Jesus does not answer to the satisfaction of those present, one of his accusers strikes him in face for disrespecting Annas.

After this, “Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest” (John 18:12-23). All of this takes place late at night after Jesus’ arrest, and in the morning Jesus’ accusers take him from Caiaphas’ house to the residence of Pontius Pilate, where they charge him with treason against Rome for his claim to be the Messiah.

THE TRAIL OF JESUS ACCORDING TO MATTHEW’S ACCOUNT

In Matthew 26:57-26:67 Jesus is taken directly to Caiaphas, not Annas. There, he is heard by the “whole Sanhedrin,” certainly an exaggeration, especially given the hour. Witnesses are brought forth who testify that Jesus has prophesied against the Temple.

Caiaphas then demands to know from Jesus whether he in fact claims to be the Messiah: “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus admits that he indeed makes this claim and adds, “In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Caiaphas tears his garment and declares that Jesus is guilty of blasphemy. (In fact the claim to be the Messiah was not considered blasphemous, although it was certainly dangerous.) As the crime of blasphemy is a “sin unto death,” Caiaphas declares that Jesus is guilty of a capital offense.

The accusers then beat Jesus and spit in his face. However, the problem still remains that under Roman administration, Caiaphas lacks the authority to execute the death sentence, and the Romans are not interested in merely religious crimes under Jewish law.

Jesus next appears before Pilate. As with the Gospel of John, Caiaphas is not mentioned as being present, his accusers being identified as “the chief priests and the elders,” apparently a coalition of Sadducees and Pharisees, though certainly not including Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, both identified as Sanhedrin members who supported Jesus.

CAIAPHAS AS SEEN BY THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The only other mention of Caiaphas by name in the New Testament occurs in Acts 4, where Peter and John are taken before Annas and Caiaphas after having healed a crippled man. Luke here makes Annas the “high priest” with Caiaphas identified as part of his family. This may be a simple error, or it may reflect the fact that Annas was still referred to by his formal title and still enjoyed considerable authority as head of his priestly family. Alternatively, the episode may take place several years later, when the younger Annas had become high priest, with Caiaphas attending as a former occupant of the office.

In any case, the priests question the apostles’ authority to perform such a miracle. When Peter answers that Jesus of Nazareth is the source of their power, Caiaphas and the other priests are surprised at his eloquence, since he had no formal education. Not being able to deny that the miracle had occurred, they warn the apostles not to spread the name of Jesus. Peter and John, however, refuse to comply, saying, “We cannot keep quiet. We must speak about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

In Acts 5, Caiaphas (or another “high priest”) convenes a session of the Sanhedrin to deal with the fact that Christians are still openly

preaching in Jesus' name despite having been warned not to. Here, the high priest is specifically identified as a member of the party of the Sadducees. A debate ensues in which the Pharisaic leader Gamaliel prevails by arguing: "If their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail... If it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God" (Act 5:38-39). The incident evidences a growing tension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, in which the underlying issue may have been dealing with groups seen as a possible threat to the Romans.

LATER LIFE AND LEGACY

Caiaphas tears his clothes upon hearing Jesus admit that he is the Messiah.

After Pontius Pilate was recalled from office, Caiaphas was removed by the new governor, Vitellius (Josephus, "Ant." xviii. 4, § 3). He was succeeded by Jonathan, who was probably one of the younger sons of Annas. A later Syrian Christian tradition held that Caiaphas eventually converted to Christianity, and even that he was identical with the historian Josephus Flavius]. The latter report is clearly erroneous, however.

Caiaphas' high priesthood, as well as that of Annas, is confirmed by Josephus, one of the few ancient sources to mention him outside of the New Testament. Like several other leading figures of the time, such as Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas became famous for an incident which in his day went unnoticed by contemporary historians, namely his role in the trial of Jesus. For this act, however, he would go on to become a major figure in Christian art, drama, fiction, and film.

From the standpoint of Judaism, Caiaphas was one of the last of the high priests in the days shortly before the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. As a wealthy and leading member of the Sadducees, his policy of accommodation to Rome exacerbated the feeling that the priesthood had become corrupt and no longer represented the interests of the Jewish people.

The New Testament description of his role in the trial of Jesus and the suppression of Christianity shows that at least the one wing of the Pharisees, as represented by Gamaliel, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, did not favor suppression of the Jesus movement, while the Sadducees actively sought to do away with it as a possible threat.

CAIPHAS ACCORDING THE MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD

by the Venerable Mary of Agreda

The whole rabble of infernal spirits and merciless foes of Christ left the house of Annas and dragged our Lord Savior through the streets to the house of Caiaphas, exercising upon Him all the cruelty of their ignominious fury.

The highpriests and his attendants broke out in loud derision and laughter, when they saw Jesus brought amid tumultuous noise into their presence beheld Him now subject to their power and jurisdiction without hope of escape.

The highpriest Caiaphas, filled with a deadly envy and hatred against the Master of life, was seated in his chair of state or throne. With him were Lucifer and all his demons, who had come from the house of Annas.

The scribes and pharisees, like bloodthirsty wolves, surrounded the gentle Lamb; all of them were full of the exultation of the envious, who see the object of their envy confounded and brought down. By common consent they sought for witnesses, whom they could bribe to bring false testimonies against Jesus our Savior (Matth. 26, 59).

Those that had been procured, advanced to proffer their accusations and testimony; but their accusations neither agreed with each other, nor could any of their slander be made to apply to Him, who of his very nature was innocence and holiness (Mark 25,56; Heb. 7,26).

Our Savior Jesus answered not a word to all calumnies and lies brought forward against his

innocence. Caiphas, provoked by the patient silence of the Lord, rose up in his seat and said to Him: "Why dost Thou not answer to what so many witnesses testify against Thee?"

But even to this the Lord made no response. For Caiphas and the rest were not only indisposed to believe Him; but they treacherously wished make use of his answer in order to calumniate Him and satisfy the people in their proceedings against the Galileean, so that they might not be thought to have condemned Him to death without cause.

This humble silence, which should have appeased the wicked priest only infuriated him so much the more because it frustrated his evil purpose. Lucifer, who incited the high priest and all the rest, intently watched the conduct of the Savior. But the intention of the dragon was different from that of the high priest. He merely wanted to irritate the Lord, or to hear some word, by which could ascertain whether he was true God.

With this purpose satan stirred up Caiphas to the highest pitch of rage and to ask in great wrath and haughtiness: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us, if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

This question of the highpriest certainly convicted him at once of the deepest folly and of dreadful blasphemy for if it was sincere, he had permitted Christ to be brought before his tribunal in doubt whether He was the true God or not, which would make him guilty of the most formidable and audacious crime.

The doubt in such a matter should have been solved in quite another way, conformable to the demands of right reason and justice. Christ our Savior, hearing Himself conjured by the living God, inwardly adored and revered the Divinity, though appealed to by such sacrilegious lips.

Out of reverence for the name of God He therefore answered: "Thou hast said: I am He. Nev-

ertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man (who I am) sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matth. 26, 64).

But the highpriest, furious at the answer of the Lord, instead of looking upon it as a solution of his doubt rose once more in his seat, and rending his garments as an outward manifestation of his zeal for the honor of God, loudly cried out: "He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: what think you?" (Matth. 26, 65.)

The real blasphemy however consisted rather in these words of Caiphas, since he denied the certain fact that Christ was the Son of God by his very nature, and since he attributed to the divine Personality sinfulness, which was directly repugnant to his very nature.

Such was the folly of the wicked priest, who by his office should have recognized and proclaimed the universal truth. He made of himself an execrable blasphemer in maintaining that He, who is holiness itself, had blasphemed.

Having previously, with satanical instinct, abused his high office in prophesying that the death of one man is better than the ruin of all the people, he now was hindered by his sins from understanding his own prophecy.

As the example and the opinions of princes and prelates powerfully stirs up the flattery and subserviency of inferiors, that whole gathering of wickedness was incensed at the Savior Jesus: all exclaimed in a loud voice: "He is guilty of death (Matth. 26, 66), let Him die, let Him die!"

Roused by satanic fury they all fell upon their most meek Master and discharged upon Him their wrath. Some of them struck Him in the face, others kicked Him, others tore out his hair, others spat upon his venerable countenance others slapped or struck Him in the neck, which was a treatment reserved among the Jews only for the most abject and vile of criminals.

THE



MYSTERY

OF

TEMPTATION



TEMPTation
TEMPORary
pleasure

3 THINGS TO DO WHEN TEMPTED



GENESIS 39:1-12

devotiontoourlady.com wishes you a blessed & grace filled Holy Week

5. MECHANICS OF TEMPTATION

God Himself does not tempt us directly: Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God."

For God is not a tempter of evils : and he "tempteth no man." But He allows us to be tempted by our spiritual enemies, at the same time giving us the graces necessary to resist A God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able : but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."

And this for excellent reasons of His own.

1. HE WANTS TO MAKE US MERIT HEAVEN.

Undoubtedly He could have bestowed upon us eternal life as a pure gift, but in His wisdom He has willed that we merit it as a reward. He even wills that the recompense be in proportion to the merit and hence in proportion to the obstacle overcome.

Temptation, which imperils our frail virtue, is certainly one of the most trying hardships; to struggle courageously against it is one of the most meritorious acts we can perform; and once we have triumphed with God's grace, we can repeat with St. Paul, that we have fought the good fight, and that it only remains for us to receive the crown of justice which God has prepared for us. The more we have done in order to merit that crown, the greater shall be our honor and our joy.

2. TEMPTATION IS LIKEWISE A MEANS OF PURIFICATION.

1) It reminds us that through lack of vigilance and of effort in the past we have fallen, and it

becomes thus an occasion for new acts of contrition, shame, and humiliation, which make for the purification of the soul.

2) It obliges us at the same time to put forth earnest and sustained efforts lest we fall; it makes us atone for our negligences and for our surrenders by the performance of contrary acts which further purify the soul. This is why when God wants to purify a soul more perfectly in order to raise it to contemplation, He allows it to undergo horrible temptations, as we shall see when treating of the unitive way.

3. TEMPTATION IS AN INSTRUMENT OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

a) It is like a stripe of the lash that awakens us at the moment we would lull ourselves to sleep and relax. It makes us realize the necessity of forging ahead, of not halting midway, but of ever aiming higher, the more surely to remove the danger.

b) It is a school of humility, of distrust of self. When tempted we realize more fully our weakness, our powerlessness; we feel more keenly the need of grace, and we pray with greater earnestness. We see all the better the necessity of mortifying in us the love of pleasure, the source of our temptations, and we embrace more eagerly the little crosses of every day in order to weaken the power of concupiscence.

c) It is a school of love of God; for to insure our power of resistance, we throw ourselves into God's arms there to seek for strength and shelter; we are more grateful to Him for His unfailing grace; we act towards Him as children of a most loving Father to Whom we have recourse in all our trials.

Hence, temptation possesses manifold advantages and it is on this account that God allows His friends to be tempted: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove you."

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TEMPTATION

1. FREQUENCY OF TEMPTATION

The frequency as well as the violence of temptations vary greatly. Some persons are often and violently tempted; others are tempted but rarely and without being deeply stirred. There are many causes that account for such diversity:

a) First of all, there are temperament and character. Some persons are extremely passionate and at the same time weak of will; often tempted, they are upset by temptation. Others are well balanced and energetic; seldom tempted, they keep their peace in the midst of temptation.

b) Education accounts for other differences : there are souls who have been reared in the fear and love of God, in the habitual fulfilment of stern duty, and who have almost invariably received none but good example. Others have been brought up in the love of pleasure, in the dread of any kind of suffering, and have seen too many examples of worldliness and sensuality. It is evident that the latter will be more violently tempted than the former.

c) God's providential designs must also be taken into account. There are souls whom He destines for a holy calling and whose purity He shelters with a jealous care. There are others whom He likewise destines to sanctity, but whom He would have pass through severe tests in order to ground them in virtue. Lastly, others there are whom He does not destine to such a high vocation, and who will be more or less frequently tempted, but never beyond their strength.

2. THREE PHASES OF TEMPTATION

According to the traditional doctrine, as expounded by St. Augustine, there are three different phases in temptation: suggestion, pleasure and consent.

a) SUGGESTION CONSISTS IN THE PROPOSAL OF SOME EVIL.

Our imagination or our mind represent to us in a more or less vivid manner the attraction of the forbidden fruit; at times this representation is most alluring, holds its ground tenaciously and becomes a sort of obsession. No matter how dangerous such a suggestion may be, it does not constitute a sin, provided that we have not provoked it ourselves, and do not consent to it. There is sin only when the will yields consent.

b) PLEASURE FOLLOWS THE SUGGESTION.

Instinctively our lower tendencies are drawn towards the suggested evil and a certain pleasure is experienced.

“Many a time it happens”, says St. Francis de Sales “that the inferior part of the soul takes pleasure in the temptation, without there having been consent, nay against the soul’s superior part.” This is the warfare which the Apostle St. Paul describes when he says his flesh wars against his spirit. “This pleasure does not, as long as the will refuses to consent to it, constitute a sin; yet it is a danger, since the will finds itself thus solicited to yield consent. The question then is: will it yield or not?”

c) IF THE WILL WITHOLDS CONSENT, combats the temptation, and repels it, it has scored a success and performed a highly meritorious act. If, on the contrary, the will delights in the pleasure, willingly enjoys it and consents to it, the sin is committed.

3. SIGNS OF CONSENT.

The better to explain this important point, let us see what are the signs of lack of consent, imperfect consent, and perfect consent.

a) WE MAY JUDGE THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CONSENT, if in spite of the suggestion and the instinctive pleasure accompanying it, we experience disgust, chagrin at seeing ourselves thus tempted; if we struggle so as not to be overcome; if we hold the proposed evil in horror; 2 especially if we turn to God in prayer.

b) WE MAY BE CULPABLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE TEMPTATION IN ITS CAUSE, when we perform an action which we could avoid, foreseeing that it will be to us a source of temptation: “If I know,” says St. Francis de Sales, “some certain conversation leads me to temptation and to a fall, and I do voluntarily indulge therein, I am, doubtless, culpable of all the temptations that shall arise.” Yet, one is guilty only to the extent of one’s prevision, and if this is but vague and indistinct, the guilt is lessened in proportion.

c) ONE MAY CONSIDER CONSENT TO BE IMPERFECT:

1) When one does not repulse the temptation as soon as its dangerous character is perceived. There is then a fault against prudence, which without being grave puts us in the danger of consenting to the temptation.

2) When one momentarily hesitates. One would fain relish somewhat the forbidden pleasure, but one is loath to offend God, that is, after a moment’s hesitation, one repels the temptation. Here again there is a venial fault of imprudence.

3) If temptation is resisted in a half hearted way. One does resist, but in a feeble, indolent manner, a half resistance which implies a half consent, hence a venial fault.

d) CONSENT IS FULL AND ENTIRE, WHEN THE WILL, WEAKENED BY FIRST CONCESSIONS, LETS ITSELF BE DRAWN TO TASTE WILLINGLY THE SINFUL PLEASURE, DESPITE THE PROTESTS OF CONSCIENCE, WHICH RECOGNIZES THE EVIL.

In such case, if the matter be grievous, the sin is mortal; it is a sin of thought or “morose delectation,” as theologians call it. If to the thought is added desire, the fault is graver still. Lastly, if from desire one passes on to the act, or at least to the quest and pursuit of means adapted to the execution of one’s designs, then there is a sin of action.

In the different cases we have explained, doubts arise at times regarding the consent or half consent given. Then we must make a distinction between the delicate and the lax conscience; when it is question of the former, one may rule out consent, for the person is not in the habit of yielding consent, and if he had consented in this particular case he would know it. When it is question of the latter, the presumption is that the person has given full consent, for if he had not, his soul would not be troubled.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEMPTATION

1. FORESTALL TEMPTATION

We know the proverb that says : One ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; this is but what Christian wisdom teaches. When Our Lord took the three Apostles into Gethsemane, He said to them : “Watch ye: and pray that ye enter, not into temptation.” Watchfulness and prayer are the two great means of forestalling temptation.

A) TO WATCH means to put a sentry, as it were, about the soul, lest it be taken by surprise. It is so easy to fall in an unguarded moment! This watchfulness implies two main dispositions: distrust of self and trust in God.

a) We must avoid that proud presumption that thrusts us into the midst of dangers, under the pretence that we are possessed of sufficient strength to triumph over them. This was the sin of St. Peter, who at the moment Christ was prophesying the desertion of the Apostles exclaimed: “Although all shall be scandalized in thee, yet not I.” Let us, on the contrary, be mindful of the words of St. Paul: “Wherefore, he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall,” for if the spirit be willing, the flesh is weak, and safety lies only in the humble mistrust of self.

b) But, we must likewise avoid those vain terrors which only increase the danger. It is indeed

true that of ourselves we are weak, but we are invincible in Him Who strengthens us: “And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.”

c) This proper mistrust of self makes us shun all dangerous occasions, this or that association, such or such amusement, etc.... which we know by experience expose us to fall. It declares war against idleness, one of the most dangerous of occasions, as well as against that habitual indolence which relaxes all the springs of the will, and prepares it for every kind of surrender. This mistrust holds in horror those empty day dreams, which people the soul with a host of living phantoms that become threatening ere long. In a word, such mistrust leads to the practice of mortification, the compliance with our duties of state, the leading of an interior life, and the exercise of zeal. In such an intense spiritual life there is but little room left for temptation.

d) Vigilance should center round the soul's weak point, since the onslaughts generally proceed from that side. In order to fortify this weak spot, we make use of the particular examination, which concentrates our attention during an appreciable length of time upon this defect, or rather upon the contrary virtue. (n. 468.)

e) To watchfulness we must join prayer, which, placing God on our side, renders us invincible. God is concerned in our success, for it is He Whom the devil assails in us, it is His work which he would wreck in us. We may, therefore, call upon the Almighty with a holy assurance, certain that He wants to help us.

Any kind of prayer vocal or mental, private or public, prayer of adoration or prayer of petition, is good against temptation. One may, especially in times of calm, pray for help in the moment of temptation. When this moment does arrive, one has but to raise the heart to God in order to resist more successfully.

2. RESISTING TEMPTATION

This resistance will vary according to the nature of the temptations. Some of these recur frequently, but are less serious; these must be treated with scorn, as St. Francis de Sales so well explains:

“As to these smaller temptations of vanity, suspicion, impatience, jealousy, envy, fond love, and such like trash ‘ which like flies and gnats continually hover about us , and sometimes sting us on the legs, the hands or the face; as it is impossible to be altogether freed from them, the best defence that we can make is not to give ourselves much trouble about them; for although they may tease us, yet they can never hurt us, so long as we continue firmly resolved to serve God earnestly. Despise then these petty attacks, without so much as thinking of what they suggest. Let them buzz and hover here and there around you; pay no more attention to them than you would to flies.”

Here we concern ourselves chiefly with serious temptations. These must be fought promptly, energetically, perseveringly, and humbly.

A) PROMPTLY, WITHOUT PARLEYING WITH THE ENEMY, WITHOUT ANY HESITATION.

At the outset the temptation is repelled easily enough, for it has not yet gained a foothold in the soul; if we wait until it has gained entry, the repulse will prove far more, difficult. Hence, let there be no debate. Let us associate the idea of illicit pleasure with all that is repelling, with the serpent, with a traitor that wishes to ensnare us, and let us remember the word of Holy Writ: Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest near them they will take hold of thee. We effect this flight by prayer and by turning our minds to something else.

B) ENERGETICALLY, NOT INDOLENTLY AND WITH REGRET, for this would be like inviting the temptation to return, but with determination and vigor, showing the horror in which such a proposal is held: “Go behind me, Satan!”

There are, however, different tactics to be employed, according to the kind of temptations that assail us : if it is question of those temptations to alluring pleasures, we must turn away from them and take to flight by concentrating our attention on any other matter calculated to engage our faculties.

Direct resistance in such instances generally increases the danger. If it be question of temptations of aversion towards duty, of antipathy, hatred, human respect, the better course often lies in facing the difficulty squarely and honestly, and in having recourse to the principles of Christian faith in order to overcome it.

C) PERSEVERINGLY, for at times after having been routed, temptation returns with renewed obstinacy, and the devil brings with him from the desert seven other spirits worse than himself. Equal tenacity, and not less, must be matched against this persistence of the enemies of our soul; he that fights unto the end, overcomes. To be all the more assured of victory we should make the temptation known to our spiritual director.

This is the advice given by the Saints, especially St. Ignatius and St. Francis de Sales: “For you must observe,” says the latter, “that the condition that the enemy of salvation makes with a soul which he tries to seduce, is to keep silence; as those who intend to maids or married women, at the very first forbid them to communicate their proposals parents or husbands; whereas God requires, when he sends inspirations, that we should make them known to our superiors and directors. In truth, it seems as if a special grace were attached to this openness of heart. A temptation disclosed is a temptation half vanquished.”

D) HUMBLY. Humility attracts grace, and grace gives us the victory. The devil who sinned by pride, flees before a sincere act of humility; and the threefold concupiscence, that holds its power from pride, is easily overcome when by humility we have, so to speak, laid its head low.

THE ROSARY

15 Meditations on Thursday of Holy Week

**“But Mary kept all these
words, pondering them
in her heart.”
(Luke 2:19)**



devotiontoourlady.com wishes you a blessed & grace filled Holy Week

5. MEDITATIONS FOR HOLY THURSDAY

The Church and the Saints tell us that there is nothing more profitable than the meditation of the Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Holy Week is that central and poignant scene in Christ's life on Earth.

Holy Week and the Passion are like husband and wife. They go together, they live together, they think as one, they act as one. I

It is recommended that, during Holy Week, you stay with the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for each day of the week—even if you say 10, 20, 30, 40 or more decades a day.

To help you in that regard, here are some meditations to ponder for each of the fifteen decades of the Rosary. Each day's ritual will try to have meditations that reflect that particular day's events and happenings.

FIRST MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY “DAY OF JOY AND SORROW”

Like the weather, fortunes and moods change quickly. Jesus had entered Jerusalem through its gates in apparent triumph and, before the week is over, He will exit those gates in apparent failure, carrying His cross to His death on Calvary. How quickly things can change!

The Apostles entered the Cenacle, or Upper Room, with joy—ready to celebrate the Pasch; but that mood would sour by end of the night, as they were overcome by the sadness and sorrow they witnessed on the face of Jesus as they left the Cenacle for what they thought was another journey back over the Mount of Olives to their safe-haven in Bethany, with Martha, Mary and Lazarus—but it was a journey to death instead!

We never know what each day in store for us, but what we do know is that each day will be full

of joys and sorrows; successes and failures; acceptance and rejection; sincerity and betrayal; love and hate.

All of these things are from the hand of Divine Providence—the good things God WANTS to happen to us; the bad things God ALLOWS to happen to us, so that a greater good can come from the evil. God is ever trying to bring good out of evil, if man would only let Him.

The sorrows, failures, rejection, betrayal, hatred and such like things, God allows in order to make us pay for our past sins—when we caused God sorrow, failed to obey Him, rejected Him, betrayed Him, hated Him—and God also allows them in order to strengthen our virtue and test our resolve.

As Holy Scripture says: *“Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation!”* (Ecclesiasticus 2:1). *“As silver is tried by fire, and gold in the furnace: so the Lord trieth the hearts”* (Proverbs 17:3). *“For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation”* (Ecclesiasticus 2:5).

SECOND MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY “THE PASCHAL MEAL”

At sunset, on this day about half past five, the feast would have begun. The guests would be reclining around the table. The old custom of eating the Passover with the tunic worn as though ready for a journey seems to have fallen into disuse by the time of Christ. They would thank God for the wine and for the day, then the Passover dinner began.

The unleavened bread was dipped in a red sauce called haroseth. Two cups of wine were solemnly drunk, with sips of salt water in between, in memory of the tears shed in Egypt.

Psalm 113, which tells the story of the Exodus and the division of the waters of the Red Sea, was then chanted. Then the lamb was eaten with

the “wild herbs,” those sharply-flavored aromatics, marjoram, bay, thyme and basil.

Two more ritual cups of wine were drunk, the last being called “the cup of benediction” because to it was sung the Hallel, the famous song of thanksgiving, made up of four Psalms (113-116) :

“Not to us, Lord, not to us the glory; let Thy name alone be honored; Thine the merciful, Thine the faithful ... Our God is a God that dwells in Heaven ... The heathen have silver idols and golden, gods which the hands of man have fashioned ... Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, let all the nations of the world do Him honor. Abundant has His mercy been towards us; the Lord remains faithful to His word for ever.”

Psalm 17 contains an allusion to the Messiah which the Apostles must have chanted with special fervor: *“Blessed be the living Lord Who is my refuge.”*

The Passover was a joyful feast, “as delectable as the olive,” says the Talmud and the chant of the Hallel lifted the roofs. But in the heart of Jesus a deep sorrow pervaded the joy. *“With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God”* (Luke 22:15-16).

THIRD MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY “THE SHADOW OF BETRAYAL”

The night had fallen: they had lit the little clay lamps in the candelabras. It was the night of Judas.

We wonder what Judas was thinking, there among the others, who knew nothing whatever of his doings. He was probably infuriated by those words which he understood only too well—*“they shall be last who were first”*—and consumed with anxiety to finish what he had begun.

Twice Jesus had made allusions which he alone understood. While he was washing the disciples' feet he said: *"You are not all clean."* A few minutes later he referred to a Scripture verse which would be fulfilled: *"The man who shared my bread has lifted his heel to trip me up"* (John 13:11-18).

Later, during the meal, he spoke even more plainly: *"Believe me, one of you is to betray Me."* The Apostles were appalled and looked at each other, each asking: *"Lord, is it I?"*

He did not reply directly, but gave what was perhaps a final warning. *"The Son of Man goes on His way, as the Scripture foretells of Him; but woe upon that man by whom the Son of Man is to be betrayed; better for that man if he had never been born."*

Then Judas, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps in bravado, asked in his turn, *"Is it I?"* There was perhaps a slight gesture of reply only visible to the questioner, or that murmured familiar response, common among the Jews, the answer Moses gave to Pharaoh (Exodus 10:29): *"Thy own lips have said it!"* (Matthew 26:20-25).

With growing alarm, the disciples looked at one another. John—he never names himself in his Gospel, but the identification is unmistakable—was leaning against his Master's breast, and, prompted by Peter, asked: *"Lord, who is it?"*

Jesus answered: *"It is the man to whom I give this piece of bread which I am dipping in the dish."* And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot (John 13:23-26). In St. Matthew's version, Jesus chooses a different method to point out the traitor. *"The man who has put his hand into the dish with me will betray Me"* (21:23). Both versions refer to customs still observed at table in the East.

We wonder whether this gesture was a last attempt on the part of Jesus to bring back the wretched Judas to his side. But there are times when the spirit is so full of violence and resentment that a friendly gesture, instead of soothing,

plunges the tortured soul more deeply into its furnace of hate.

"The morsel once given, Satan entered into him; and Jesus said to him, Be quick on thy errand. None of those who sat there could understand the drift of what he said; some of them thought, since Judas kept the common purse, that Jesus was saying to him, 'Go and buy what we need for the feast!', or bidding him give some alms to the poor. He, as soon as he received the morsel, had gone out; and now it was night" (John 13:27-30).

It was night, the immediate evocation of the eye witness who saw the door open upon the terrace and the traitor hastening in the darkness toward his doom. No conscious artist could have written with greater literary effect; and, beyond its lightning visualization of the scene, the mind calls up a vision of that more impenetrable darkness into which this man, caught up in a monstrous destiny yet impelled by his own choke, is plunged forever, because he confirmed the rejection of Christ.

FOURTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY "THE WASHING OF THE FEET"

There is a two-fold point to the washing of the feet, just as there are two feet! The first, of course, is the virtue of humility. Our Lord insisted: *"Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls"* (Matthew 11:29). As Holy Scripture adds elsewhere: *"Nor from the beginning have the proud been acceptable to thee: but the prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased thee"* (Judith 9:16).

The world pushes us to be proud—this has always been part of the culture of the world, but this is especially true today. That is why Holy Scripture is relentless in telling us that we cannot be part of the world, that we must separate ourselves from the world, otherwise we will take on the world's stench of pride and become enemies of God.

“Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him!” (1 John 2:15). “If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world ... therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19). “Know you not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God!” (James 4:4).

The world will make us proud, the Faith will make us humble. We cannot serve both.

The second point—or second foot washed—is that of Confession, which naturally follows on from humility. We are reminded of the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee thanks God that he is not like the rest of men—sinners. The sinful publican humbly strikes his breast saying: *“God, be merciful to me the sinner!”* It was the humble publican who went away justified, not the proud Pharisee.

The Pharisee was doing no perceptible wrong, but he was proud about the good that he was doing and despised the sinners who did not do what he did.

The Publican was not focused on any good he might have done; nor was he focused on any evil that others might have done—he was focused on his own personal sins. This reminds us of Our Lord’s words: *“Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye; and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye? Or how sayest thou to thy brother: ‘Let me cast the mote out of thy eye!’—and behold a beam is in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite! Cast out first the beam in thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:3-5).*

It is in the Sacrament of Confession that we humbly focus on our own personal sins and accuse ourselves of those sins—there is no absolution for you if, in Confession, you focus on the sins of others and accuse them of their sins! You can only wash that dirty foot clean if you focus

on your sins and accuse yourself of them!

FIFTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY

“THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST”

Towards the end of the supper, a new rite, unknown to the Mosaic Law, was inaugurated by Jesus, in words and gestures by which the tragedy so soon to come was explained. Matthew, Mark and Luke report it with only very slight variations. *“Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take, eat, this is My Body!’ Then He took a cup, and offered thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink, all of you, of this! For this is my blood, of the new testament, shed for many, to the remission of sins!’” (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20)*

No Christian can read these words without feeling the presence of Christ living. However they may be interpreted, as the Real Presence according to the Catholic Church or as a solemn commemoration, as is believed by the majority of the Protestant sects. Sadly, today, many Catholics (around 60%-80%) no longer believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Just watching the attitude and behavior of people in church, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, is a “dead give-away” as to their probable beliefs. In theory, they might still believe, but by their actions they manifest a practical disbelief. Actions speak louder than words. Gone are the careful genuflections, the reverence and silence, the sense of awe.

Union with God has always been man’s noblest and highest aim. The words of Jesus, considered in their deepest sense, mean that in receiving the Bread and the Wine, the faithful absorb the Body and Blood of Christ, however unworthy they may be of such a great grace.

The transformation of the substance of the bread into Christ, is in no way connected with the intention of him who receives it. Had Judas

“partaken” (which he seems not to have done) he would also, even he, have received the body and blood of Christ—though sacrilegiously. The mysterious ceremony which Christ instituted at the Last Supper is linked to an earlier discourse of Jesus’ in the synagogue at Capernaum (John chapter 6), where Jesus had partially revealed the future mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

It may be assumed that when he said, *“This is my body,”* at the Last Supper, the Apostles must have recalled to mind that strange earlier discourse about the Bread of Life which they had found so difficult at the time.

“I am the Bread of life ... I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven ... If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my Flesh, for the life of the world ... Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For my Flesh is meat indeed: and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him ... He that eateth this Bread, shall live for ever.”

There is no other possible interpretation to these words of Jesus. It is plain, simple, clear, forceful language. Yet, all through time, beginning at the very time Jesus spoke these words, there has been opposition and disbelief.

“Many therefore of His disciples, hearing it, said: ‘This saying is hard, and who can hear it?’ But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this, said to them: ‘Doth this scandalize you? There are some of you that believe not!’

“For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that did not believe, and who he was, that would betray Him. Then Jesus said to the Twelve: ‘Will you also go away?’ And Simon Peter answered Him: ‘Lord, to whom shall we

go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known, that thou art the Christ, the Son of God!’

“Jesus answered them: ‘Have not I chosen you Twelve? And one of you is a devil!’ Now He meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon—for this same was about to betray Him, whereas he was one of the Twelve” (John chapter 6).

Across the centuries the Church, reproducing in the Sacrifice of the Mass the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper, has offered the faithful the bread, by which they communicate with the living God, and to every priest, at the moment when he raises the Host and the Chalice, pronouncing the liturgical formulae of consecration: *“This is My Body. This is My Blood.”*

There is no greater treasure on Earth than that of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Holy Eucharist that comes from it! Yet there is no treasure that is more neglected than the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Holy Eucharist.

Look at the scant and hurried preparations that are made before Mass! Look at the postures, behavior, attitude, even sleepiness of some persons at Mass! Look at the speed with which many priests race through Mass. Look at the speed with which the church empties after Mass, with little or no serious thanksgiving being made—except some routinely hurried prayers from some prayer book that less and less people carry around today. Look at the enthusiasm they show after Mass, an enthusiasm which they could not muster up during Mass!

So it is the Lord’s death that you are heralding, whenever you eat this Bread and drink this Cup, until He comes. And therefore, if anyone eats this Bread or drinks this Cup of the Lord unworthily, he will be held to account for the Lord’s Body and Blood. A man must examine himself first, and then eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup; he is eating and drinking damnation to himself if he eats and drinks unworthily, not recognizing the Lord’s Body for what it is” (1 Corinthians 11:26-29).

SIXTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY **“JUDAS COMMUNICATES WITH ENEMIES”**

Instead of being in communion with Jesus, through the Holy Eucharist, Judas ends up communicating with the devil through sin and conspiracy with the Scribes and Pharisees.

Our Lord had said: *“He that is not with Me, is against Me”* (Matthew 12:30). There is no neutrality with Christ. No spectatorship. No sitting on the fence. No trying to please one side and the other—pleasing God and pleasing the world. The world is an enemy of God: *“Adulterers, know you not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God!”* (James 4:4). St. James calls Christians who blend in with the world “Adulterers”!

Judas is certainly not with Him. Judas is two-faced. Judas wants the best of both worlds. Heaven and Earth. Our Lord had said: *“Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust, and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also”* (Matthew 6:19-21).

SEVENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY **“THE WASHING OF THE FEET”**

“And now, rising from supper, He laid His garments aside, took a towel, and put it about Him; and then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples, wiping them with the towel that girded Him. So, when He came to Simon Peter, Peter asked Him, ‘Lord, is it for Thee to wash my feet?’ Jesus answered him, ‘It is not for thee to know, now, what I am doing; but thou wilt understand it afterwards.’ Peter said to Him, ‘I will never let Thee wash my feet!’ and Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash thee, it means thou hast no companionship with Me!’ ‘Then, Lord,’ said Pe-

ter, ‘wash my hands and my head too, not only my feet’” (John 13:4-9).

Once again Peter’s ardent, impetuous character, so very much of a piece through the Gospel record, is sketched in a few brief sentences. *“Do you understand what it is I have done to you?”* asked Jesus. *“You hail me as the Master, and the Lord; and you are right, it is what I am. Why then, if I have washed your feet, I who am the Master and the Lord, you in your turn ought to wash each other’s feet; I have been setting you an example, which will teach you in your turn to do what I have done for you”* (John 13:12-15).

One of the most moving parts of the Catholic Office for Holy Week is when, on Maundy Thursday, the officiating prelate—the Pope himself in the Sistine Chapel—kneels to wash the feet of the twelve poor men who symbolize the Apostles.

Jesus tried, by this dramatic gesture, finally to break the shell of pride and envy, the matrix of the human creature, which stifles even the best of us. When the Passover solemnities were finished, the meal proceeded more informally with the guests reclining upon the litters which the Greeks had brought into general usage. There would naturally be competition for the place next to Jesus and inevitably a dispute arose as to who was most entitled to it, who was the chief of the Twelve.

Again Jesus had to call them to order. *“The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them ... With you it is not to be so; no difference is to be made, among you, between the greatest and the youngest of all, between him who commands and him who serves. . . . You are the men who have kept to My side in my hours of trial: and, as My Father has allotted a kingdom to Me, so I allot to you a place to eat and drink at My table in My kingdom; you shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”* (Luke 22:24-30; Mark 10:35-45; Matthew 20:20-28).

Still today, we are ever jostling for positions, influence, authority, power, etc. Our Lord told

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us learn from Him because He was meek and humble of heart—but we are angry and proud of heart! Let us learn from this washing of the feet to humble ourselves—for God has cast down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the humble!

EIGHTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY
“THE NEW COMMANDMENT”

NINTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY
“YOU WILL BE SORROWFUL”

TENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY
“THE ROAD TO GETHSEMANE”

ELEVENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY
“THE THREE FAVORITES”

TWELFTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY
“WATCH AND PRAY”

THIRTEENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY
“BETRAYED AND BOUND”

FOURTEENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY
“BEFORE THE EX-HIGH PRIEST ANNAS”

FIFTEENTH MEDITATION ON HOLY THURSDAY
“BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST CAIPHAS”

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THE ROSARY

15 Meditations on Thursday of Holy Week

**“But Mary kept all these
words, pondering them
in her heart.”
(Luke 2:19)**



HOLY WEEK ANGELUS



devotiontoourlady.com wishes you a Merry and “Mary” Christmas!

6. THE ANGELUS

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THE ANGELUS

- V.** The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
R. And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.
HAIL MARY....etc.
- V.** Behold the Handmaid of the Lord.
R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.
HAIL MARY....etc.
- R.** And the Word was made flesh.
V. And dwelt amongst us.
HAIL MARY....etc.
- R.** Pray for us O holy Mother of God.
V. That we may be made worthy of the
promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. **R.** Amen.

A PRAYER OF UNITY

In rural parishes, when the parish Angelus bell tolled at noon, a person could scan the many fields and see people stopped in their tracks as they prayed the Angelus. In those days, the Angelus was so much a part of rural life that as soon as the first toll of the bell was heard, the horses stopped themselves without having to be told to do so by their drivers. What a wondrous sight it must have been to look out over the fields and, there, see your neighbor praying the same prayer you were praying at the same time of the day—giving a little token and a sense of feeling of unity in Faith.

IT COMES IN “THREES”

Since the Angelus is divided into three parts, we

will have three parts to the article. Firstly, the spiritual part; then the historical part; and finally the practical part or its usage.

The Incarnation is a central dogma of the Faith. It is the launch-pad of the act of our Redemption and Salvation. It the foundation of all that follows. It is a mind-blowing event, where God humiliates Himself to take on our flesh and our nature. For us to reduce ourselves to the level and nature of tiny bug, is not even anywhere near the ‘reduction’ undergone by God in becoming man. It is something that we rightfully and justly should remember each day.

The Angelus reminds us of the Annunciation and Incarnation, when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary with great, if somewhat startling, news! As we read in Chapter One of Luke’s Gospel, (Luke 1:26-38) God wished Mary, truly a model of humility, to be the Mother of His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ!

GENUINE HUMILITY

When we pray the first mystery of the Holy Rosary—the Annunciation—we often announce that the fruit of this mystery is humility. Mary’s humility was genuine. As St. Alphonsus Liguori notes in his classic work *The Glories of Mary*, “*her only desire was that her Creator, the giver of every good thing, should be praised and blessed.*”

When Mary calls herself the handmaid, or the servant, of the Lord, in the Angelus (from Luke 1:38) it is with inspiring humility and sincerity. She thought of herself first and foremost as God’s servant, seeking glory, not for herself, but rather for Him. Mary was happy to have God work through her. As she expressed it most famously in the canticle the Magnificat, “*My soul magnifies the Lord and my Spirit rejoices in God my Savior*” (Luke 1:46-47).

St. Paul echoed this wonderful sentiment when he wrote that “*he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord*” (2 Corinthians 10:17). In so doing, Mary became, as St. Augustine put it rather poetically, a “heavenly ladder, by which God came into the world,” descending from Heaven to Earth, to be-

come flesh in her womb. This brings to mind the line from Matthew’s Gospel: “*Whoever humbles himself shall be exalted*” (Mathew 23:12).

“YES” TO GOD — “NO” TO THE WORLD

The Angelus pays tribute to a crucial aspect of Mary’s role in the Incarnation, when it quotes from Luke’s Gospel “*be it done to me according to thy word*” (Luke 1:38). This wonderful event could not have happened without her consent, without what is known as her fiat. By saying “yes” to God in allowing herself to become His mother, she showed us the ultimate example of trust in our Creator!

TOO TOUGH?

Do you think that having that kind of Faith is too daunting a task? Think about the ways in which God calls each of in our daily lives. Do we say “yes” when Christ wants to work through us, in showing His love to others? Or when He asks us to be graceful in trying and testing situations? Mary knew that the Messiah would be a “Man of Sorrows”—to accept being His Mother, meant that this was not going to be walk in the park or a picnic! This was going to mean trouble, real trouble; together with suffering, real suffering. Prayer and meditation on Mary’s reaction, to the invitation in the Annunciation, can help us to do His will.

LOVE IS A UNION OF WILLS

Speaking of God’s word, the Angelus completes its short summary of the Incarnation with the moving reference to our Lord from John’s Gospel: “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). As we read in the letter to the Hebrews, Christ was like us in all things but without sin (Hebrews 4:15). St. Bernard noted that our Lord came to show us His love, so that He might then experience ours—that we might say to Him, “Be it done unto me according to Thy word”—for love is a union of wills; it is wanting what the beloved wants.

HOLY WEEK
PRAYERS TO
BE SAID
BEFORE AND
AFTER
MEALS



7. PRAYERS TO BE SAID BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS

Psalm 21:1-12

There are two versions to choose from:

- (1) The modern English "You and Your"
- (2) The traditional "Thee and Thou"

BEFORE MEALS

ALL MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

LEADER: Christ was made obedient for us

ALL: Because of this God exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a Name which is above all names.

LEADER: In the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

ALL: Of those that are in Heaven, on Earth, and under the Earth! For He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Then is said the following psalm.

Version 1 (modern English)

ALL: My God, my God, why have You forsaken me, far from my prayer, from the words of my cry? O my God, I cry out by day, and You answer not; by night, and there is no relief for me.

Yet You are enthroned in the holy place, O glory of Israel! In You our fathers trusted; they trusted, and You delivered them. To You they cried, and they escaped; in You they trusted, and they were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, not a man; the scorn of men, despised by the people. All who see me scoff at me; they mock me with parted lips, they wag

their heads: *"He relied on the Lord; let Him deliver him, let Him rescue him, if He loves him."* You have been my guide since I was first formed, my security at my mother's breast. To You I was committed at birth, from my mother's womb You are my God. Be not far from me! For I am in distress! Be near, for I have no one to help me!

Version 2 (Thee & Thou English)

ALL: O God my God, look upon me! Why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins. O my God, I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear: and by night, and it shall not be reputed as folly in me. But Thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel. In Thee have our fathers hoped: they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them. They cried to thee, and they were saved: they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded.

But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. "He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver him: let Him save him, seeing He delighteth in him!"

For Thou art He that hast drawn me out of the womb: my hope from the breasts of my mother. I was cast upon Thee from the womb. From my mother's womb thou art my God! Depart not from me! For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me!

LEADER: No one lives on bread alone.

ALL: But on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

LEADER: A time of penance has been granted us.

ALL: To atone for our sins and heal our souls.

LEADER: For our sake Christ was obedient, accepting even death.

ALL: Death on a cross.

LEADER: The eyes of all creatures look to you to give them food in due time.

ALL: You give it to them, they gather it up; you open your hand, they have their fill.

LEADER: Let us call on the name of the Father, Who always takes care of His children.

ALL: Our Father . . . but deliver us from evil. Amen.

LEADER: Bless us O Lord

ALL: And these Thy gifts which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AFTER MEALS

ALL MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

LEADER: Christ was made obedient for us

ALL: Because of this God exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a Name which is above all names.

LEADER: In the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

ALL: Of those that are in Heaven, on Earth, and under the Earth! For He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

LEADER: Lord, you have fed us with Thy gifts and favors.

ALL: Fill us with Thy mercy, for Thou art merciful and Thy mercies are above all Thy works.

LEADER: For the sake of Thy holy Name, O Lord

ALL: Reward those who have been good to us and give them eternal life. Amen.

LEADER: Our compassionate Lord has left us a memorial of His wonderful works.

ALL: He has given food to those who fear Him.

LEADER: We give Thee thanks almighty God

ALL: For all Thy benefits, Who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

LEADER: May the souls of all the faithful departed

ALL: Through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.