



Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to Jesus, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' **13** So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, **14** and say to the owner of the house which he enters, "The Master says: Where is my dining room in which I can eat the Passover with my disciples?" **15** He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there.' **16** The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

22 And as they were eating he took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them. 'Take it,' he said, 'this is my body.' **23** Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, **24** and he said to them, 'This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be

poured out for many. 25 I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.' **26** After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives.

Other readings: Exodus 24:3-8 Psalm 115 (116) Hebrews 9:11-15

The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ is an opportunity to revisit the events of Holy Thursday, and in particular the institution of the Eucharist. It is against the background of Jesus' approaching death that we gain a deeper understanding of the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper.

The disciples are told to prepare the Passover. While the Jewish Passover feast celebrated God's goodness in liberating the chosen people from slavery in Egypt, the Supper which Jesus gives will commemorate the selfless love of his death on the cross, by which we are liberated and born to new life.

In blessing and sharing the bread and wine Jesus is giving himself. By doing this in memory of him his disciples make present through the centuries the gift and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Letter to the Hebrews illustrates how the death of Christ is the once-and-for-all sacrifice of himself for our salvation. It makes redundant all the sacrifices of the old law. It is by his own blood that Christ purifies us. The blood of goats and bulls is no longer necessary. This is why Christ's sacrifice is the sacrifice of the 'new covenant' of which we are the beneficiaries.

What does the Eucharist mean to me?

How can I avoid a sense of routine as I take part in the Mass?

Pray for a deeper awareness of being drawn into the Body of Christ by receiving the Eucharist.

Pray for a sense of unity with God's people as we share 'one bread' and 'one cup'.