

Maundy Thursday: “I have longed and longed to eat this Passover with you”

We should dwell on those words of Jesus, and make them our own: *Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobiscum*: I have longed and longed to eat this Passover with you. There is no better way to show how great is our concern and love for the Holy Sacrifice than by taking great care with the least detail of the ceremonies the wisdom of the Church has laid down.

17 April

This is for Love: but we should also feel the "need" to become like Christ, not only inside ourselves but also in what is external. We should affect, on the wide spaciousness of the Christian altar, with the rhythm and harmony which holy obedience provides, the holy obedience that unites us to the will of the Spouse of Christ, to the Will of Christ himself. (The Forge, 833)

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." The reader of this verse from St John's Gospel is brought to understand that a great event is about to take place. The introduction, full of tender affection,

is similar to that which we find in St Luke: "I have earnestly desired," says our Lord, "to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."

Let us begin by asking the Holy Spirit, from this moment on, to give us the grace to understand every word and gesture of Christ. Because we want to live a supernatural life, because our Lord has shown his desire to give himself to us as nourishment for our soul, and because we acknowledge that only he has "words of eternal life."

Faith makes us profess in the words of Peter that "we have come to believe and to know that you are the Christ, the Son of God." It is this faith, together with our devotion, that leads us to emulate the daring of John, to come close to Jesus and to rest on the breast of the Master, who loved those who were with him

ardently, and who was to love them, as we have just read, to the end.

Any words we might use to explain the mystery of Holy Thursday are inadequate. But it is not hard to imagine the feelings of Jesus' heart on that evening, his last evening with his friends before the sacrifice of Calvary. (Christ is passing by, 83)

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