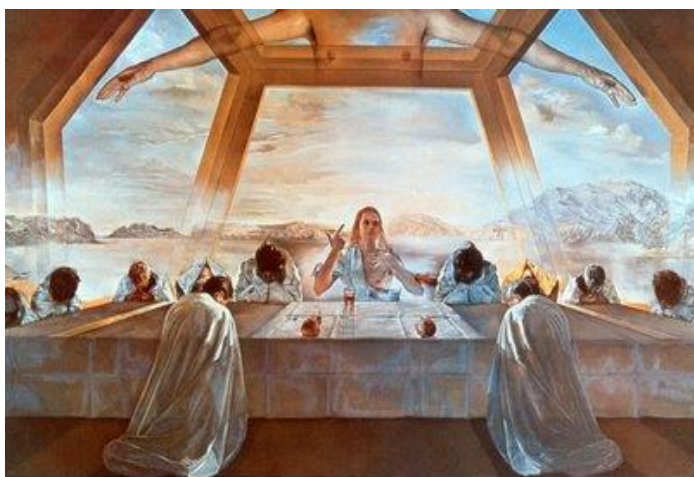


Holy Thursday Reflection

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to him, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' 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, 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?" He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there,' The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

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.' Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them, 'This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many. I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.' After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives.



Prayer Reflection

Lord, on this great feast we thank you for the weekly assembly of your Church when we gather as disciples to celebrate your Passover, and you are present with us, saying "Take and eat, this is my body," then saying "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."

Lord, when things are going wrong for us, we panic, we act as if we are no longer in control. We thank you for people like Jesus. Even as he entered Jerusalem, knowing that there he faced the hostility of many and that they were determined to put him to death, he remained in control of his destiny. He knew that he had friends in that hostile city and could plan the celebration of the Passover.

Lord, a time comes in life when we have to give ourselves as spouses, parents, church ministers, public servants. We have to say to those we serve, "Here, take it, this is my body"; we have to say, "Here, this is my blood, the sign of the covenant between us; I am pouring it out for you and through you for many others."

Lord, you always seem to send us friends who stand by us in difficult times. We quarrel among ourselves, they let us down from time to time, but the meals we share in times of crisis seal a sacred covenant between us, so that we can leave together for our Mount of Olives.

Lord, your will continues to be that every community of disciples should eat the body and drink the blood of your incarnate Word, so that they may experience the Covenant in a new way,

never again to be content with the old, as they drink the new wine of your kingdom.

Lord, remind us always that when Jesus tells us "Take it, this is my body" he is also speaking of the poor whom we meet on our life's journey, and when he says, "This is my blood which is to be poured out for many," he is also speaking of those who suffer innocently today.

Lord, we pray that Church communities today may live again the experience of the Last Supper, becoming communities where members give their body and blood in the service of one another and of all men and women, where they dream of the day when they will drink new wine in your kingdom, and where, having sung their psalms, they will go out together to confront the world.