

# The Last Supper

*Grace: Ask for the grace to better know and understand Jesus so that your love for Jesus will grow and your desire to imitate him will increase.*

## Introduction:

Because of your familiarity with the passage, it may be tempting to think ahead. Resist that temptation by remaining focused on this particular meal with Jesus and His friends. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to experience the Last Supper in as much detail as possible. You have traveled with Jesus back to Jerusalem. It is time for the celebration of the Passover meal. As a Jew you have celebrated the Passover every year.

Read the Scripture accounts of the Last Supper and place your self prayerfully back in that time with Jesus and the other disciples. Choose a role that allows you to get involved with Jesus at the table. Use your senses to help you to experience more fully what is happening. Can you smell the bread? What do you and the other disciples talk about? What is the mood in the room? What happens as Jesus begins to talk about the one who will betray Him? It is one thing when Jesus seemed to go after the Scribes and the Pharisees, then Jesus snapped at Peter and called him Satan, and now Jesus is talking about someone at the table being a traitor. How do you react to Jesus' accusation? Is Jesus being paranoid?

Could it be you? Perhaps you to have some doubts in your mind and heart about this path that Jesus is choosing. It certainly does not seem very wise. When Jesus starts talking about the bread and the wine being his body and blood, do you understand what he means? What are your feelings as you listen to Jesus and sing songs of celebration? What is Jesus' mood?

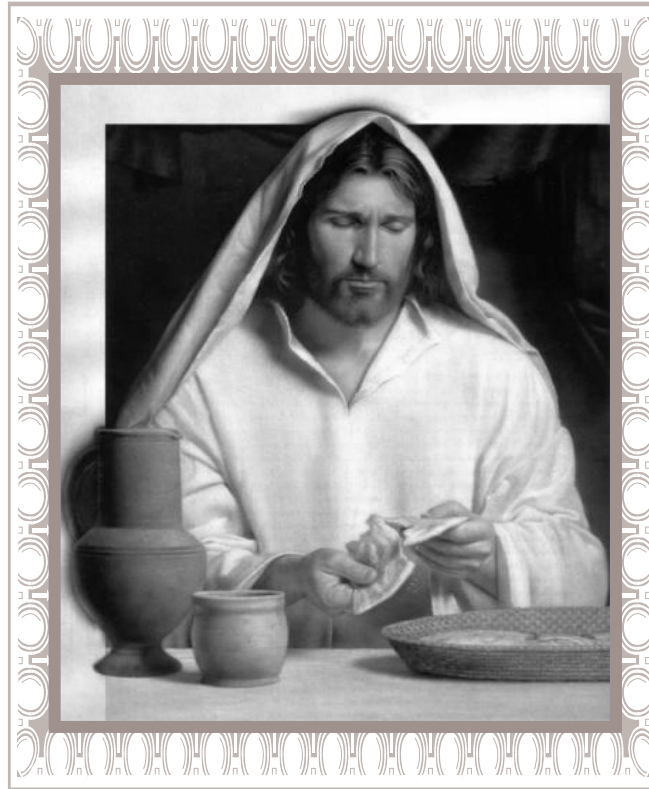
In the Gospel of John, it describes Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. Jesus continues to teach through word and deed. How do you respond to Jesus washing your feet? How do you respond to the accusation that you will betray your closest friend?

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus talks about being with him in times of trial. Are you willing to commit to be there with Jesus if things get difficult? If so, talk to Jesus about your commitment and try to understand what it is that Jesus is asking of you. Speak with Mary about your commitment to Jesus. Talk with God about your concerns for Jesus. What words of wisdom or comfort do they offer?



**John 13:1-30 -The Last Supper** - It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of His love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God; so He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For He knew who was going to betray him, and that was why He said not every one was clean. When He had finished washing their feet, He put on his clothes and returned to His place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" He asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.' "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." After He had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them He meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to Him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask Him which one He means." Leaning back against Jesus, he asked Him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.





**Luke 22:7-34 -The Last Supper** – Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there." They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him." They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this. Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

**In these or similar words ...** I imagine myself as Peter at the time of Passover celebration. Jesus had just given John and me the instructions to prepare for our Passover meal and I was filled with great excitement and anticipation for our meal together. After finishing the preparation for the Passover Supper, everyone began to gather at the table in our banquet hall. Immediately, as the meal began and the chatter began to subside, my excitement began to fade as I noticed that Jesus seemed preoccupied and slightly disconnected from the excitement around him. Then he spoke, saying that he had looked forward to this last Passover meal with us because he wouldn't eat it again until He was in the Kingdom of God. Although he smiled slightly and had a trace of warmth in his voice, I could tell that inside, he was deeply troubled by the thought of facing the next few impending hours of his fate. Then he began to raise the cup of wine and the bread and talk about the "new covenant" being poured out for us, and I tried to understand and follow along, but my mind began to wander anyway. Jesus apparently sensed this, for he looked over at me and gave me an encouraging glance. Then he began to speak of a traitor that according to him was sitting among us at the table. Immediately, I looked down and my cheeks turned red with embarrassment at my past weaknesses at following Jesus. The recent thought of my lack of understanding of the speech Jesus just gave flashed through my head and I wondered if my weaknesses were enough to make me weak enough to betray Jesus soon. When he finally gave the bread to Judas, a wave of relief flowed over me and I felt good again for a brief moment, until the realization that Jesus would be betrayed and he would have to suffer and die soon hit me again, and I became somber. However, after Judas had departed and the events of Jesus' passion had set into motion, all of us, including Jesus, enjoyed one last brief moment of peace together with each other. The feelings of uncertainty, doubt, and misunderstanding I felt when Jesus was talking about how he was the new and everlasting covenant called to mind those same feelings that I have felt before at the recitation of those same words during the Mass. When I have felt like I didn't understand the Mass or didn't belong in the Church, I have often felt that I was not living up to my role and might eventually "betray" the promise of the Church community, much as I feared betraying Jesus when he announced the presence of a traitor. However, in realizing that I can play an active role in the Church community and that I am valuable to Jesus, (as his quiet looks of encouragement reminded me), I have found comfort in knowing that Jesus considers me a faithful friend.

**Practicing What Your Preach ...** To better understand Jesus' desire to share this meal with His disciples and to set an example for them of service, go beyond the call of duty. You may wish to consider making a commitment to go to daily Mass to celebrate Jesus' gift of Himself to you. Allow yourself to focus more deeply on how Jesus gives Himself to you through the Eucharist. Even further, you may wish to consider becoming a Eucharistic Minister at your parish or bring Holy Communion to someone who cannot make it to Mass.



I want you to remember my touch. I want you to know how I love you. You are not untouchable in my eyes nor to my hands. You are not unclean. You are loved. I want you to wash the feet of others. I want you to continue what you do. I want you to do what I do. But most of all, I want you to remember my touch. I want you to know that what you do does not make me love you more because I already love you --- even unto death.