



## MAUNDY THURSDAY

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU  
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault  
(Fontgombault, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026)

In like manner also the chalice, after He had supped, saying:  
This chalice is the new testament in My blood.  
This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me.  
For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice,  
you shall shew the death of the Lord, until He come.

(1 Co 11:25–26)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
My dearly beloved Sons,

**A**T THE HEART of the liturgical year, of Holy Week, this evening's Mass holds a special place. It commemorates an event that took place almost two thousand years ago: the institution of the Eucharist. This event was recounted by the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians. St. John, likely considering that the celebration of the Eucharist was well established in the local churches, recalled the rite of the washing of the feet and the long discourse delivered by the Lord.

From that first Mass onward, every Mass is, through a unique mystery, the sacramental presence of that event. To affirm this goes far beyond simply recognizing in the celebration of Mass the words and gestures that the Lord once performed. No! Every Mass is present in that first Mass because, at the

moment the priest pronounces the words of Consecration, by virtue of the ministerial priesthood he received on the day of his ordination, he acts *in persona Christi*, in the person of Christ. Then the bread and wine he holds in his hands become the Body and Blood of Christ. Then, like the disciples at the Last Supper, we are in the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ and we proclaim the Passover of the Lord.

The Gospel of John is structured around three Passovers, each linked to a specific event. Around the time of the first Passover, the wedding at Cana takes place. Mary is concerned about the confusion that will soon overwhelm the young couple: “They have no wine.” Jesus responds somewhat provocatively: “Woman, what is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.” Yet Mary concludes, addressing the servants: “Whatever He shall say to you, do ye.”<sup>a</sup> The jars are then filled with water, but it is wine that they will pour out in abundance.

Around the time of the second Passover, the first multiplication of the loaves took place. After Jesus’ teaching, the disciples were concerned about food for all those who had followed them. Shouldn’t they send everyone back to the surrounding towns and villages? Jesus, still provocatively, then addressed the disciples, inviting them to provide food for the crowd themselves: “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”<sup>b</sup> “Give you them to eat.”<sup>c</sup> But they only had five loaves and two fish. The Lord took the bread and the fish, gave thanks, and instructed His disciples to distribute them. Everyone ate their fill, and twelve baskets were filled and taken away.

As they prepared to celebrate this last Passover, the third He shared with His followers, the crowds were no longer there, and the disciples wondered once more, “Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch?”<sup>d</sup> Finding a place was not easy in the tense atmosphere of the time, as Judas was in the process of betraying his Master. To indicate the location, Jesus invited the disciples to follow a man carrying a jar of water. A powerful symbol. Hadn’t Jesus said, “If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.”<sup>e</sup> The room

a. *Jn* 2:3-5.

b. *Jn* 6:5.

c. *Mk* 6:37.

d. *Mt* 26:17.

e. *Jn* 7:37.

was located upstairs in a house, a large room furnished with carpets. Such must be the soul of one preparing to receive his Lord.

Christ testifies that He longed with a great desire to share this Passover with his disciples. Sister Faustina writes in her *Diary*:

Holy Hour. Thursday. During this hour of prayer, Jesus allowed me to enter the Cenacle, and I was a witness to what happened there. However, I was most deeply moved when, before the Consecration, Jesus raised His eyes to heaven and entered into a mysterious conversation with His Father. It is only in eternity that we shall really understand that moment. His eyes were like two flames; His face was radiant, white as snow; His whole personage full of majesty, His soul full of longing. At the moment of Consecration, love rested satiated—the sacrifice fully consummated. Now only the external ceremony of death will be carried out—external destruction; the essence [of it] is in the Cenacle. Never in my whole life had I understood this mystery so profoundly as during that hour of adoration. Oh, how ardently I desire that the whole world would come to know this unfathomable mystery!<sup>f</sup>

*f. Diary,*  
II. 127, n. 683.

If Christ so earnestly desired to share this Passover with His own, do we so earnestly desire to come forward to receive his Body and Blood? Are we faithful to the Lord's command: "Do this in remembrance of Me"?

The unleavened bread that Israel eats every year at Passover commemorates the haste of the departure that liberated them from Egypt; the remembrance of the manna in the desert will always recall to Israel that it lives by the bread of the Word of God (cf. Dt 8:3).<sup>g</sup>

*g. CCC, n. 1334.*

For us, symbols give way to reality. On the eve of the Exodus from Egypt, the lamb was sacrificed in families as food for the promised land. The Body and Blood of Christ are our sustenance as we journey towards the promised land of eternity.

The Second Vatican Council teaches:

At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.<sup>h</sup>

*h. Constitution  
Sacrosanctum Concilium,  
n. 47.*

Don't let us become accustomed to the Mass! It remains forever the immense gift of God's love. On this day, let us also ask the Lord for the grace of many holy priests. The Lord always has a great desire: to share His Passover with us.

Amen.

