

Week 9: March 13, 2008
CCP 213
Joseph Hollcraft M.A.

Homework assignment: What is the interdependence between the Incarnation, humiliation, and exaltation? How do these three relate when assessing our call to holiness during this liturgical year? God Bless!

XXII. Themes of the Eucharistic discourse. Primarily drawn from the Ignatius commentary.

A. The Bread of life (Jn.6.1-72). This sign is highlighted by the Passover (6.4). Three times this feast is mentioned in John (2.13; 11; 55). It was celebrated annually in Jerusalem to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery (Ex.12). Central to the feast is a liturgical meal, called the Seder, in which the story of the exodus is retold, psalms are sung, and a lamb is eaten with unleavened bread and other condiments. The evangelist mentions this upcoming feast in this "bread of life" discourse to hint that Jesus will give a new and greater meaning to the Passover.

1. Jn. 6.1-14... *"The Multiplication of the Loaves."* Note here that the two food miracles in John's Gospel involve bread and wine. Together this anticipates the Eucharistic liturgy.

2. Jn. 6.4... *"The Passover."* Christ is the true "Lamb of God" whose redeeming work will accomplish a new deliverance from the slavery of sin (8.31-36) in a sacramental and liturgical meal.

a. **Afikoman** tradition. The Jewish tradition see this loaf, which is first hidden and then brought forth, as a symbol of the longed-for coming of the Messiah. There was an anticipation of the Messiah as fulfilling a new king of thanksgiving.

1. We must ask as children of God, What does this mean (Ex.13.14)?

b. Christ transforms this feast into Eucharistic meal of the new covenant at the Last Supper (Mt.16; CCC 1340).

3. Jn. 6.9;12... *"barley loaves...twelve baskets."* Similar to Elisha, but greater (2 Kings 4.42-44).

a. Twelve baskets similar to the twelve tribes/apostles and the disbursement of the food.

4. Jn. 6.11;23... *"given thanks."* Renders the Gk. **Eucharisteo** (ros), from which the English word Eucharist is derived.

a. The miracle of the loaves thus foreshadows the institution of this sacrament as the Last Supper.

b. The OT vision of Thanksgiving was always accompanied with praise and blessing. For the faithful Jew it was a way of life. In this line of thinking the early Christian saw each day as a resurrection and an opportunity for praise and thanksgiving.

1. Ps.50.23; Heb.13.15...God has blessed the world and he expects us to give back in a "sacrifice of praise" (Liturgical and anthropological)...also see Mal.1.11

5. Jn. 6.35... *"I am the bread of life."* Note here that Christ associates the title "I am" with the bread of life. John is clearly associating God's own identity with that of the Eucharist.

6. Jn. 6.41... *"The Jews then murmured."* Recalls how the Israelites were complaining against Moses in the wilderness (Nm.11.1; Ex.16.2).

- 7. Jn. 6.52...** *“his flesh to eat.”* The crowd here is thinking of cannibalism.
- a. For cannibalism to be present you have to kill to eat, and Christ willingly offers his own life that we may eat of the living bread.
- 8. Jn.6.53...** The Greek word used for eat used throughout the Eucharist discourse is **esthio/fago**, in verse 53 it suddenly changes to **Trogo**, which means to *“crunch or gnaw on animals...ie, lamb.* This word was usually used for the animals humans would consume. Also the tense of the verb **trogan (pl)** implies the continual consumption of the Corpus Christi.
- a. I note here that Christ was born in a manger in the city of Bethlehem. The Latin word for manger is **mandere**, meaning to *“chew or gnaw“*, the Hebrew root to Bethlehem means *“house of Bread.”*
- 9. Jn.6.60...** *“Who can listen to this”*...if this was just some symbol the disciples would have not responded the way they did (66) in this passage.

C. The Passion Narrative (Jn.18.1-19.42). The passion narrative records the most significant events in the life of Christ--the sorrowful mysteries. It highlights Passover as the corporate feast day that Christ must fulfill as sacrificial the lamb of God.

- 1.Jn.18.6-8...** *“I am.”* Christ unleashes the power of the divine name simply by uttering it.
- a. The claim to divine inherency is that Christ still has power over all things despite what is about to take place.
- 2.Jn.18.11...** *“the chalice.”* The cup of suffering that Christ will drink on the cross (Mt.26.39; CCC 607). This also speaks to the four cups that are seen during the Passover sacrifice.
- a. Cup # 1: cup to bring about the beginning of the feast.
 - b. Cup #2: cup with recital of exodus 12 and the singing of Ps.113.
 - c. Cup # 3: cup of blessing in which lamb with unleavened bread was eaten. Psalms 114-118 were sung.
 - d. Cup #4: cup with sour wine ratifying feast.
- 3.Jn.18.15...** *“another disciple.”* This is John who continues to choose not to disclose his own name in his gospel.
- 3.Jn.18.27...** *“again denied it.”* Three times Peter denies his association with Jesus, just as three times he fell asleep while Jesus prayed in agony and three times he will renew his commitment to Jesus after the Resurrection.
- a. Christ gives us an excellent example of how we can atone for our own times of denial with a contrite heart expressing our love for the Father.
- 4.Jn.18.36...** *“My kingship.”* Jesus does not deny his royal mission, but he disassociates it from the political form of government that concerns Pilate. He thus turns the focus toward heaven, where he will be crowned not with gold but with glory and honor (Heb.2) and where homage is paid to him no tin taxes but in worship and allegiance to truth.
- a. The coronation of Jesus begins with his passion and culminates with his Ascension, from which time his domination extends over the earth through the preaching of the apostles and sacramental ministry of the Church (Mt.28.18-20).
- 5.Jn.19.1...** *“scourged.”* flogging was a cruel prelude to crucifixion in Roman practice. Tied to the ends of the whip were fragments of bone or metal designed to tear into the flesh.
- 6. Jn.19.14...** *“preparation for the Passover...the sixth hour”* Passover was the corporate Jewish feast. The “how to” celebrate this feast can be found in Ex.12. The sixth hour (noted in the diagram of typological realities below) was when the

lambs were being slain for the temple sacrifice. Christ's own death highlights that he is the true paschal sacrifice who came into this world to be slaughtered for our sins.

a. Ex. 12 is the Passover blueprint that finds its fulfillment in Jn.19. Here the sacrificial lamb died as a ransom, in place for the first born of the household.

1. Ultimately Passover, was when God instructed each Israelite family to take an unblemished lamb without broken bones and sprinkle it with blood on the doorposts. That night, the Israelites were to eat the blood of the lamb. If they did the first born were spared, otherwise they died. Here is a quick look at how Christ becomes the one and perfect Passover sacrifice.

Exodus 12

John 19

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Ex.12.22...“hyssop branch” | 1) Jn.19.29... “hyssop branch” |
| 2) Ex.12.46... “unbroken bone” | 2) Jn.19.36... “Unbroken bone” |
| 3) Ex... “priest in purple robe” | 3) Jn.19.2... “purple Robe” |
| 4) Ex... “6 th hour slaughter” | 4) Jn.19.14... “about the 6 th hour” |
| 5) Ex... “seamless tunic” | 5) Jn.19.23b... “seamless tunic” |

b. Lk.22.17-20...Ex.24.8... “This is the blood of the new covenant.” When Christ echoes the words of Moses to the disciples the covenant made on Sinai is elevated to a staggering realism.

1. The “pasch” of Christ is the concrete realism of the new liberation in the new covenant from slavery (cf. Ex.12.14). In essence, Israel's Passover is the annual recalling (see **Word of the Week on Remembrance**) of the act of God that was liberation and the thus the foundation of the community.

a. It follows that the Eucharist, *communio* “par excellence;” becomes the precipice of and source of all unity.

2. In Israelite antiquity the blood of the covenant was that which created the person whole and in turn gave way to peace. This is the deepest mystery of *Shalom* in the Israelite milieu.

a. Past events are consciously used as liturgical models for the covenantal meaning of human destiny. The new Passover emphasizes, like that of the Old Covenant, the actualization of a historical deliverance.” “The bible and the Liturgy are sacred Histories”--Danielou

7.Jn.19.18... “*one on either side.*” The four gospels agree that Jesus was crucified between two criminals. John's description is similar to that in the Greek version of Ex.17.12.

a. Moses' arms were suspended in the air by Aaron and Hur as they stood on either side of him. This was to ensure for Israel a military victory over the Amalekites. Jesus' arms are similarly stretched out between two men as he triumphs over the unseen armies of the devil (Col.2.14).

8.Jn.19.20... “*this title...Hebrew, Latin, Greek.*” The various languages that read “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” is another early sign that all peoples belong in the new covenant sealed in water and blood .

9.Jn.19.24... “*they parted my garments.*” A quotation from Ps.22.18, a psalm

that runs parallel to the entire plot of the Passion narrative.

a. Psalm 22 is a clear depiction of a righteous sufferer, ironically it is the one suffering that brings vindication for the people (**see notes on Todah**).

10.Jn.19.25-27... “*Woman...behold your son.*” Although seen as impersonal to modern readers it actually is a polite gesture in biblical antiquity. Jesus seems to be echoing Gen.3.15, where the mother of the Messiah as the ‘woman’ whose offspring conquers evil (CCC 726; 2618).

a. John is not just an individual disciple, he is portrayed by the evangelist as an icon of every disciple whom Jesus loves. In this sense, Mary is given to all beloved disciples of Christ, just as every disciple is given to the maternal care of Mary.

1. The assumption here is that family relations are extended beyond the limits of natural lineage, so that every baptized believer has God as Father, Christ as eldest brother, Mary as mother, and the saints as brothers and sisters.

b. John also wishes to recount his earlier usage of woman in the Wedding Feast at Cana and its direct relationship with the cross and the wedding feast of the lamb (Rev.19.7 and earlier notes on The Wedding Feast at Cana).

11.Jn.19.34... “*blood and water.*” Stresses the reality and finality of Jesus’ death.

a. This episode is reminiscent of Num.20.10-13 as read in Jewish tradition. In the original story only water issued forth from the rock struck by Moses, but in the Aramaic tradition blood and water gushed forth.

1. Paul similarly interprets this rock as a symbol of Christ, from which flows spiritual drink of the Eucharist (1 Cor.10.14-16) and the Spirit (1 Cor.12.13).

b. John Chrysostom was the first to offer some allegorical insight into this passage. The water and blood streaming from the side of Christ are symbolic of the new life we receive in Baptism (water) and the Eucharist (blood).

1. Moreover, the church constitute these sacraments as the bride of Christ that issues from his side, just as Eve came forth from the side of Adam (Gn.2.21-23; Rom.5.14).