

## The Last Supper and the Mass

The liturgy recalls the events that saved us and makes them present



### TARGET AUDIENCE

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#### Overview

This Object is based on the Church tradition that the Eucharist was instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper. It advances the notion that the memorial of the Last Supper is a central ritual for Christians, as it has been throughout history since the event of Jesus celebrating his last meal.

The multimedia element 'matches' the actions of the Priest and the Assembly today with the actions of Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper.

#### Teacher Background

Teachers are encouraged to review the 'Exploring the Mass' section of the DVD Rom *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* to deepen their understanding of the scriptural, historical and theological foundations of the Eucharist.

In particular, the following aspects of *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* provide entry points and context for this Learning Object:

- Within the pathway 'Scriptural Foundations' click on the tab 'The Last Supper'. It would be pertinent to read the other scripture passages in this pathway under the tabs 'Passion & Death', 'Resurrection', 'Emmaus', and 'Ascension'.

*Where appropriate, use this material with the students.*

#### Supporting Content

*This text supports the focus of the multimedia element.*

Jesus and his disciples ate a Passover meal together before Jesus' Passion and Death. Jesus' final Passover meal with his friends is known as the Last Supper and is recounted in all four Synoptic Gospels. In Luke's Gospel, we hear Jesus' words: 'Do this in memory of me'. In the Gospel of John, we see Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. Jesus says: 'So, if I your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.' (John 13:14).

Church Tradition teaches how the Eucharist began at the Last Supper and how the early community obeyed Jesus' command to 'break bread' in his name (Acts 2:42). This memorial of the Last Supper became a central ritual for Christians when they gathered together. In the earliest times, the Eucharist

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was celebrated along with a shared meal in the homes of local Christians. In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes a Eucharist celebrated in connection with a common supper shared in the homes of the early Christians. This supper included the blessing of the bread and wine, the breaking of the bread, and communion. As the numbers of Christians grew, the Eucharist as a sacred meal separated from the common meal.

Believers today still remember and celebrate the Last Supper on Holy Thursday. For Jews, this time is the beginning of the Jewish Passover Festival. The bread and wine are symbols of nourishment and food for the Christian journey. Believers take part in the Eucharist to give thanks to God, and share this meal as a community. In community believers gain strength from everyone who has gathered.

### Last Supper Accounts

#### Mark 14:12-26

##### *The Passover with the Disciples*

<sup>12</sup>On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' <sup>13</sup>So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, <sup>14</sup>and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' <sup>15</sup>He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.' <sup>16</sup>So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>17</sup>When it was evening, he came with the twelve. <sup>18</sup>And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.' <sup>19</sup>They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, 'Surely, not I?' <sup>20</sup>He said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. <sup>21</sup>For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.'

##### *The Institution of the Last Supper*

<sup>22</sup>While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' <sup>23</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. <sup>24</sup>He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for

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many. <sup>25</sup>Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

#### Luke 22:7-23

##### *The Preparation of the Passover*

<sup>7</sup>Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.' <sup>9</sup>They asked him, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for it?' <sup>10</sup>'Listen,' he said to them, 'when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters <sup>11</sup>and say to the owner of the house, "The teacher asks you, 'Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' " <sup>12</sup>He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.' <sup>13</sup>So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

##### *The Institution of the Lord's Supper*

<sup>14</sup>When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup>for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God'. <sup>17</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes'. <sup>19</sup>Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'. <sup>20</sup>And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup>But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. <sup>22</sup>For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!' <sup>23</sup>Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

#### Matthew 26:17-30

##### *The Passover with the Disciples*

<sup>17</sup>On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' <sup>18</sup>He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples." ' <sup>19</sup>So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>20</sup>When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; <sup>21</sup>and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' <sup>22</sup>And they

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became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' <sup>23</sup>He answered, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup>The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.' <sup>25</sup>Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

#### *The Institution of the Lord's Supper*

<sup>26</sup>While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' <sup>27</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; <sup>28</sup>for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup>I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

<sup>30</sup>When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

### **John 13:1-20**

#### *Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet*

<sup>1</sup>Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup>The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup>got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

<sup>12</sup>After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup>So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one

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another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup>Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. <sup>18</sup>I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, "The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me." <sup>19</sup>I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. <sup>20</sup>Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.'

### For Reflection and Discussion: Ideas for Use

*Select one or more of the following activities for students to complete.*

- 1 **The Last Supper and the Mass is one of three Objects on the Last Supper: The Last Supper and Images of The Last Supper. Screen for the students the multimedia elements of these other two Objects. Invite the students to name three insights they have gained into the foundations of the Eucharist as a result of viewing all three.**
- 2 **Screen the multimedia element to enable students to complete this task. It may also be helpful to the students to screen the Object Liturgy of the Eucharist in the 'Receive' section.**  
Students record the words of Jesus in the Last Supper that are similar to the words said by the Priest during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- 3 **Invite students to undertake the following task:**  
Why does the Mass matter to you? Ask two or three people you know well e.g. your parent or carer, brother or sister, and a Catholic neighbour, why the Mass matters to them.

### Teacher Professional Development Resources

Zenit, ['Papal homily at Last Supper Mass'](#), April 2011