

## CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation



June 14, 2009

Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Cycle B)

### Gospel reading

**Mark 14:12-16, 22-26**

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make

the preparations for us there." The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover. While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Then, after singing a hymn,\* they went out to the Mount of Olives.

*\*Thanksgiving songs always concluded the Passover meal.*

### Brief commentary:

While each celebration of the Eucharist is a memorial of Christ's sacrifice, today, the Church draws attention to the connection between Christ's sacrifice and the Eucharistic sacrifice. Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, we remember the love of God for us manifested in the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

When Mark wrote his Gospel, the community was a mix of Jewish and Gentile members. Thus, the narrative includes some traditions of Jewish rituals and some Christian adaptation of the original Jewish rites. Examples of this are, "The Feast of the Unleavened Bread," and the "Passover Lamb." The words and actions of Jesus within the celebration of the Passover meal show the transition to a new covenant. This new covenant is the sacrifice of himself for love of humanity. His blood, shed for many, alludes to the ancient rite of Exodus 24:4-8\*\* and points to the new community that will be born out of his sacrifice.

\*\* "Moses...took half of the blood and put it in large bowls; the other half he splashed on the altar... Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you..."

### Today's reading offers three significant messages:

- Christ is the Messianic King and Priest of the new covenant.
- Christians are called to live out the meaning of the Eucharist by serving Christ in those who hunger for food or for a dignified life.
- With the Great Amen at the Eucharist, Christians say YES to the entire Body of Christ. This includes Christ's real presence in the sacrament, but also in all those around us. Through the Eucharist we become one with him and with one another.

### For our shared or personal reflection:

*After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.*

1. How can I be "bread" for someone who needs help?
2. When I say AMEN to the Body and Blood of Christ, do I also welcome those whom I dislike?

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 787; 1328-1339; 1355; 1397; 1403-1419.