

Palm Sunday

"I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer"

Reading 1:	Isaiah 50:4-7	Responsorial Psalm	:	Psalms 84
Reading 2:	Phil 2: 6-11	Gospel	:	Luke 22:14-23

Gospel Reading: [See *Passion Narrative & Meditation for [Luke 22:14--23:56](#)*] or Luke 19:28-40

Scripture: *Luke 22:14-23*

14 And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And he took 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." 20 And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But behold the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. 22 For the Son of man goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" 23 And they began to question one another, which of them it was that would do this.

Meditation: Why did Jesus "earnestly desire to eat this Passover meal" with his disciples? Luke mentions that "the Passover lamb has to be sacrificed" on this feast (Luke 22:7). This would be Jesus' last meal with his chosen twelve. It was not coincidental that he would suffer and die on a cross at Passover time. Luke points to Jesus' death as the sacrificial Passover lamb who fulfills and makes obsolete the sacrifices of the old testament. This meal is both a celebration of the Passover according to the old covenant and the institution of a new covenant to be commemorated by a new meal. Jesus institutes this "new covenant" in the form of a last will and testament. Jacob and Moses, just before their deaths, blessed their heirs with their last will and testament (Genesis 49; Deuteronomy 33). Jesus' Passover is similar as he blesses his chosen twelve who would become the leaders of the new Israel. Jesus' institution fulfills the Old Testament promises of a "new covenant" and "new exodus" which would bring about true freedom from slavery to sin, as well as the promise of blessing.

Luke ties the last supper meal with Jesus' death and the coming of God's kingdom. Jesus transforms the Passover of the old covenant into the meal of the "new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in sacrifice as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to their Creator. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine, who was both priest and king (Genesis 14:18), prefigured the offering made by Jesus, our high priest and king. The unleavened bread at Passover and the miraculous manna in the desert are the pledge of God's faithfulness to his promises. The "cup of blessing" at the end of the Jewish Passover meal points to the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Jesus gave a new and definitive meaning to the blessing of the bread and the cup when he instituted the "Lord's Supper" or "Eucharist". He speaks of the presence of his body and blood in this new meal. When at the Last Supper Jesus described his blood "*poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*" (Matthew 26:28), he was explaining his coming crucifixion as a sacrifice for sins. His death on the cross fulfilled the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. That is why John the Baptist called him the "*Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.*" Jesus made himself an offering and sacrifice, a gift that was truly pleasing to the Father. He "*offered himself without blemish to God*" (Hebrews 9:14) and "*gave himself as a sacrifice to God*" (Ephesians 5:2). This meal was a memorial of his death and resurrection.

"Lord Jesus, you are the "Bread of Life" and the "Cup of Salvation". May I always follow in the narrow way of the cross toward the heavenly banquet where you will seat all the elect at the table of your kingdom."

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. Am I on the right path towards salvation? And the indications that I have towards the right path moving towards salvation?
2. What have I done for this lent, to bring my family nearer to Jesus?