

The Last Supper

On the first day of the great Jewish holiday of Passover, the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him: "Where do You want us to prepare the holiday supper?"

This holiday supper was a very special meal eaten with special prayers and ceremonies.

Jesus answered: "Go into the city. There you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and when he enters a house, go to the owner of the house and say to him: "The Master asks: Where is the guest room where I shall eat the holiday supper with My disciples? Then the owner of the house will show you a large room on the upper floor, furnished and ready. There you can prepare our supper."

Two of the disciples, John and Peter, went and found everything as Jesus told them and made ready for the meal. Then, in the evening, Jesus and the other disciples came to the house, and they all sat down around the table.

You remember that in Jesus' time people did not wear shoes and stockings or socks as we do. They either walked barefoot or wore sandals. The roads were dusty and hot. When someone had guests, he would have a servant bring a basin of water and a towel to bathe his guests' feet. It was a way to welcome guests and make them comfortable.

On the day Jesus and His disciples gathered for the holiday supper there was no servant to serve them. Therefore Jesus got up from His place, tied a towel around his waist, took a basin, filled it with water, and began bathing His disciples' feet. When He finished, He said: "Do you know what I have done? Even though I am your Master and Lord, I have served you. Therefore, when you go out into the world, you must serve one another."

There were twelve disciples gathered with Jesus on that night. All twelve of them had been with Jesus from the time when He began to preach to the people. All of them loved Jesus -all of

them except one. His name was Judas. Judas had received thirty silver coins from the enemies of Jesus because he had promised that he would betray Jesus. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him. As the supper went on, He said to the disciples: "One of you shall betray Me," and He turned to Judas and said: "What you are about to do, do quickly!" None of the other disciples understood what Jesus meant; but Judas got up and left the room and went to call the Master's enemies.

During the supper, Jesus took a loaf of bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to His disciples, and said: "TAKE, EAT, THIS IS MY BODY." Then He took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "DRINK OF IT ALL OF YOU; FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD, WHICH IS SHED FOR MANY."

In this way, for the very first time, Holy Communion was given. Jesus Himself gave the Holy Communion to His disciples, and told us to do so in His memory.