



The Passover, of course, prefigured: our Lord's sacrifice, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Holy Eucharist. The lamb that was sacrificed laid down its life to save another; this is what our Lord did for us. Sprinkle the doorposts with blood – we must immerse ourselves in the Blood of Christ, which means what? Receiving the mercy, He won for us through real repentance (contrition, sorrow for sin), Confession, and conversion. We are to participate in the lamb's sacrifice, not by killing it but rather by following it – sacrificing ourselves for the sake of what is right and good and true, in response to the love of the Lamb. Those sacrifices are then united with His, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; Jesus makes His Passion present in the Mass and we stand with Him – like Mary & John – offering our sacrifices to Him. Then we receive Him in the closest most intimate way possible here in this life – by eating the flesh of the sacrificial lamb in Holy Communion.

What this tangible, concrete event of the Passover might help us understand the most, though, is what our Lord really did for us. Go back to the book of Exodus and read about the cruel, harsh enslavement that the Israelites were under when in Egypt; really ponder it, imagine it. What they were delivered from by the blood of their lamb is a small piece of dust compared to what our Lord delivered us from. If our love of God is cool, if our gratitude to Him is almost nothing, it is because we do not really realize the gravity and consequences of our sins, it is because we have not really entered into repentance and conversion. That is to say, we have not yet sprinkled our doorposts with the Blood of the Lamb. If I have not really entered into repentance or if I think I don't need to – for whatever reason, because "I'm a good person" or whatever it is I use to justify avoiding it – then I *am* still subject to the avenging angel. There is no other way to avoid that avenging angel; just going through the motions is not enough. The Blood of the Lamb has to be on the doorposts. It is sad to see so many take this lightly or even scoff at it and brush it aside. Why? Yes, repentance (acknowledgement of and deep sorrow for sin) stings a little but it leads to true freedom. Do you think you will ever regret it? Is it not much more likely that our Lord is in fact truthful and that we will regret it if we don't do it?

We might also take notice of the fact that once the Israelites were delivered, they were to head towards the promised land. The material promised land of the Israelites corresponds to the higher reality of Heaven. One has to be delivered (immersed in the Blood of the Lamb) before he can get on the way. If you continue to read the book of Exodus you will see that, instead of heading headlong to the promised land, they ended up wandering around in the desert for 40 years. Almost none of those who were initially delivered actually made it to the promised land. That's because, after their initial delivery (that we receive, for example, in Baptism), after seeing the great and mighty works of God, what did they do? Extend gratitude? Commit themselves fully to the Lord? No, they grumbled and groused about God and against Him. The same is and will be true for us. Once on the way, we have to stop grumbling and proceed with minds fixed on Him.

Now sometimes a person has enough humility, and thus enough openness to God, to say: it's true, I don't really have a deep sorrow of, or even knowledge of, my sins; how do I get it? This is a topic that we will return to over and over again. Yes, devotional practices will help if sincerely engaged in, personal prayer, weekday Mass, Confession, and so on – all of these are very helpful. But probably the biggest thing that keeps most Mass-attending Catholics from really getting on the path to *the* promised land, to immersing themselves in the blood of the lamb – the mercy of God – is just what we have talked about: a failure to really stop, put everything else out of our mind, and really ponder the mysteries of the faith. Having something to read can often help with this (recollection). Scripture is excellent, of course, but if you are looking for some more reading material, one of my favorites is: "The Way of Divine Love," based on the visions of Sr Josefa Menendez. Sr (Blessed) Josefa recounts the messages she received from our Lord, and they are striking, captivating.

Let us come to one last thing that is needed, and which can also be drawn out of Exodus. One of the first things God told Moses at the burning bush was: remove your sandals *because...* this is holy (or sacred) ground. Sacred, in regard to created things, means things set aside for God. It is a necessary part of our worship of God. It says: you are special, Lord. Conversely, having nothing sacred, or not treating what is sacred as sacred says: nothing special here, you're actually not special to me. A sense of the sacred has been largely lost in the world today, all too often even in the human dimension of the Church. The church itself and even the Eucharist are all too often treated casually, as if to say: nothing special here. How many prepare themselves to receive our Lord by making a good Confession – as if to say: ah, it's no big deal. Let us consciously and intentionally begin to build this sense of the sacred more and more in our parishes. God bless you, Fr Kuhn.