

## Maundy Thursday

“With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer”

Oh! the ardent longing of the Heart of Jesus for His priests! He desired, with a great desire, to eat *this Pasch* . . . Several times already, He had eaten the Pasch with His disciples; but it was not *this Pasch* during which He was to institute His Priesthood. Like a father in the midst of his children, He presides at the repast; then He rises, and with exquisite humility, He kneels down before His disciples, and renders them the service of a slave, washing their feet and drying them gently. In order to diminish in some way the distance which separates them from Him, to raise up their courage, and render them less unworthy, even in their own eyes, of the favours of their divine Master, He says to them: “You are clean”. He does still more. He raises them up to Himself, He establishes equality between them and Himself, He even goes so far as to assure them that: "Whoever receives him whom He shall have sent, receives *Himself*"(Matt. X, 40).

The goodness of Jesus is displayed not only towards His faithful disciples, it extends even to him who betrayed Him. By warnings full of love, by affectionate words, He seeks to touch the heart of the traitor. He endeavours at least to instil into his heart the faith and the confidence which might bring him back after his crime.

The solemn moment has come. Infinite Love is going to produce a masterpiece; Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Power are going to co-operate in it. It will be the gift *par excellence* of divine Charity; it will be the Blessed Eucharist! God with us, God in us; Jesus Christ, God and man united, spirit to spirit, heart to heart, body to body, with man redeemed and purified: "Take ye and eat" says the Saviour. "Drink ye all of this".

But the effort of love is not completed. Jesus will not be always there in His human and perceptible form to work this great miracle. Other men invested with His power must succeed Him, and renew, during the course of centuries, the mysterious transubstantiation which He has just operated. Then it is that the Priesthood issues from the divine Heart. The privileged ones who surround Jesus at this hour, receive this sacred and indelible character which makes them priests for eternity, and which, the elect of love will bear from generation to generation, for the glory of their God and the salvation of the world.