

## Maundy Thursday—The Mass of the Institution

By God's direction through Moses, the Passover Feast was celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of *Abib*, the first month of the ancient Jewish calendar (Exodus 12:1-20). The Passover was part of the week-long observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 23:15), instituted as an annual remembrance by Israel of God's greatest act of deliverance in the Old Testament—His saving of His people from Egyptian bondage.

At the third Passover meal of our Lord's "earthly ministry", He instituted the New Testament. In so doing, He put in place a new and better Meal, a Meal in which by Sacramental Union He gives His Body with the Bread, and His Blood with the Wine. Although the drinking of blood was prohibited in the Old Testament (Leviticus 17:10-11), because "the life is in the blood", in the New Testament, the one who drinks the Blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, the Lamb to whom all Old Testament sacrifices pointed, receives forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28), and the new life He took up in His glorious Resurrection—life eternal.

The name "Maundy Thursday" is derived from the Latin *Mandatum Novum*, or "a new command." At the Last Supper, the Lord said to His disciples, gathered in the Upper Room for the Passover Feast, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34) This command of our Lord has long been associated with the washing of the feet, as He did to His disciples, a liturgical ceremony known as "The Maundy".

### Cover Art – *The Last Supper*

*An illumination from a picturebook of the life of Christ*

*Northern France, perhaps Corbie, ca. 1175 A. ⚭D.*

*Item number M.0044 from the Pierpont Morgan Library of  
Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts.*

This illustration is said to have come from a book held in the Abbey of St. Martial of Limoges, France, established in 848 A. ⚭D. and closed in 1781 A. ⚭D.

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