

The Meaning of the Mystical Supper

- + The Mystical/Last Supper “looks backwards” to the Covenant established with the original People of God at the foot of Mt. Sinai. (EXOD. 24:4-8). It also recalls the mystery of the manna.
- + More immediately, the Eucharist will recount the recent meals that Jesus shared with His followers (MATT. 9:10-13, 11:19); and more especially the multiplying of the loaves and fishes that fed the multitudes. (14:13-21; 15:32-39)
- + The Eucharist transforms the meaning of the Jewish Passover. It now becomes the Christian act of communal worship *par excellence*.
- + The Eucharist is now the Church’s way of communing with Christ until the end of time. Christ is “in our midst” when we celebrate the Eucharist.
- + The Eucharist anticipates the messianic supper in the Kingdom of God at the end of time.

According to St. John Chrysostom (+407):

“This table is the same as that and has nothing less.”

“The offering is the same, whether it be offered by some ordinary man, or by Paul or Peter. That which Christ gave to His disciples, and that which the priests minister now is the same. This is in no wise inferior to that, because it is not men that sanctify even this, but the Same who sanctified the one sanctifies the other also.”

According to Fr. George Florovsky (+1979):

“The Eucharistic Sacrament is neither a mere remembrance nor a ‘repetition’ of the Last Supper. It is rather its ‘manifestation’ or extension. Worshippers are, as it were, *taken back* to the Upper Room and made participants of the same sacred Supper.”