

BEHOLD THE LAMB: SESSION 13

Behold Your Mother

John 17-19 · A Catholic Journey Through the Gospel of John

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim: Tonight every thread converges and the seals open. Participants watch the final I AM flatten a cohort in a garden, hear Peter answer it with I am not beside a charcoal fire, and then follow John's clock: sentenced at the sixth hour of Preparation Day, as Jerusalem turned toward the afternoon on which its Passover lambs were slaughtered, given vinegar on a branch of hyssop, finished with the word that completes loved them to the end, and pierced without a bone broken, exactly as Exodus commanded for the lamb. Then, together, the group opens the guesses they sealed thirteen weeks ago, and discovers that the Gospel has been answering them all along.

Catholic Touchstone: The Paschal Lamb (CCC 608), the Church born from the pierced side in blood and water (CCC 766, 1225), and the Mother given from the cross: Woman, behold your son... Behold your mother (CCC 964). And the words every Catholic hears as the Host is raised before Communion, now fully loaded: Behold the Lamb of God.

A Note on Tonight's Format

This is the study's longest reading and its emotional summit. Two recommendations. First, proclaim the Passion (chapters 18 and 19) the way the Church does on Palm Sunday and Good Friday: assign parts in advance, a narrator, a reader for the words of Christ, one or two for the other voices, and read continuously in the blocks marked below, pausing only where the questions fall. Second, confirm at the door that everyone brought their sealed guess from Week One. Have blank slips ready for anyone who forgot theirs; they can write what they remember guessing before the ceremony. The opening of the guesses is the hinge of the night; protect it.

What You Need to Know

Chapter 17, the High Priestly Prayer, is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus, and its opening line fuses the study's two longest threads for the last time: Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son. Three notes to carry in. First, 17:5 reaches back to your first session: glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made, the Prologue praying in the first person. Second, 17:19 names what kind of prayer this is: for their sake I consecrate myself, *hagiazō*, the verb of consecrating priests and victims for sacrifice. In every sacrifice Israel ever offered, priest and victim were two; here, uniquely, the priest consecrates himself as the offering. The title High Priestly Prayer is precise: he is priest and victim at once, and tomorrow's altar is a hill. Third, the unity petitions (17:11, 21-22) your group already weighed in Session 9; collect the receipt briefly, that they may be one as we are one, participation in a unity whose original is essential, and move on. And 17:3 deserves ten seconds of silence: this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Eternal life defined, and the definition is a relationship.

The arrest (18:1-11) is staged in a garden, and John, who never wastes a set, means it: sin entered the world in a garden, and this Gospel will arrest, bury (19:41), and raise its redeemer in one. Judas arrives leading a cohort with lanterns and torches, hunting the Light of the world with lamps, and Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, steps forward and asks the question that has bracketed this Gospel since its first chapter: whom do you seek? (18:4; compare 1:38). They answer, Jesus of Nazareth, and he says it: *egō eimi*, I AM, and they drew back and fell to the ground (18:6). The final absolute I AM, and its most dramatic: the Name spoken in the dark flattens armed men. No arrest happens in this Gospel until the prisoner permits it; 10:18 governs every verse of the Passion, and Jesus' first use of his untouchability is to shield the sheep: if you seek me, let these men go. Peter's sword, the servant's ear, and the correction: shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me? The cup is accepted before the trial begins.

The denials (18:15-27) contain the Gospel's most devastating verbal irony, and your group's board makes them ready to hear it. The doorkeeper asks Peter, are not you also one of this man's disciples? He said, I am not: *ouk eimi*. While Jesus stands inside answering the high priest, having said *egō eimi* in the garden, Peter stands outside at the fire saying *ouk eimi*, twice (18:17, 25). The counter-melody the Baptist sang in humility, I am not, Peter now sings in fear, and the antiphon of the whole Gospel, I AM against I am not, plays across a courtyard. And the fire: it was cold, and the servants had made a charcoal fire, *anthrakia* (18:18), a word that occurs exactly twice in the entire New Testament. Here, and in one other place this study has not yet reached. Say only: remember this fire. Then the third denial, and at once the cock crowed (18:27), the bird from Session 11, precisely on schedule. John records no weeping; he lets the crow land and cuts away, and the silence is a mercy, because this evangelist knows something about Peter's story that he is saving.

Now the timestamps, which are the hinge of the entire study, so handle them with total precision. First, 18:28: the accusers would not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. On the surface reading of John's clock, weighed honestly in tonight's steelman, the Passover meal is still ahead of them on Friday morning, and the lambs not yet slain. Second, 19:14: now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour, and Pilate said, Behold your King! Two detonations in one verse. The sixth hour: your board has carried a leader-sealed clock since Session 5, for this Gospel contains exactly two sixth hours, a tired man asking a woman for a drink at a well (4:6), and this one; and thirst frames both: the tired ask at the well, and, past the far end of this one, I thirst (19:28). And on the day of Preparation, the sixth hour was the threshold (the temple's own schedule ran earlier than usual when Preparation Day fell on the eve of the Sabbath, m. Pesahim 5:1, though the precise starting hour is debated; what is not debated is that the afternoon belonged to the lambs): from midday the city's ordinary business gave way to the feast, and through the hours that followed the priests slaughtered the Passover lambs for the whole city, thousands of them, all that afternoon. As Jerusalem turns to its lambs, the true Lamb is sentenced in the praetorium, and Israel's chief priests answer Behold your King with the most terrible sentence they ever spoke: we have no king but Caesar, renouncing, at the hour of the lambs, the kingship of God their fathers sang. Pilate's Behold is the study's title verb; the Baptist said Behold the Lamb, Pilate says Behold the man and Behold your King, and John intends every echo. This chronology is also where tonight's steelman lives, because the Synoptics appear to date the Last Supper as the Passover meal itself, and your group deserves the difficulty at full strength before the seals open.

At the cross, John's details are a checklist he expects his reader to grade. The titulus in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek: the languages of covenant, empire, and the world; the Greeks who wished to see Jesus (12:20) can now read the answer posted over his head, and Pilate, like Caiaphas, proclaims truth despite

himself: what I have written I have written. The seamless tunic, woven from top to bottom, dividing which would destroy it: Josephus describes the high priest's robe as a single woven garment without seam, and many Fathers heard the priesthood in the detail; hold it hedged, with Psalm 22:18 quoted in the text. Then 19:25-27, the session's title: standing by the cross, his mother, and the disciple whom he loved. Woman, behold your son... behold your mother. Collect the Cana bracket aloud: the mother of Jesus appears exactly twice in this Gospel, at Cana where he said Woman, my hour has not yet come, and here, where the Hour has come and he says Woman again. And collect 16:21: a Woman, in the anguish of her hour, and something being born, for at the foot of the cross a new family is constituted, the mother and the beloved disciple given to each other, the Church in embryo. The beloved disciple is never named in this Gospel, and the ancient instinct is that the anonymity is a doorway: every disciple Jesus loves is invited to stand in his place and hear behold your mother. And from that hour the disciple took her *eis ta idia*, into his own, his own home, his own life, his own inner keeping. The Church reads here Mary's motherhood of all the beloved disciples (CCC 964); the precise dogmatic contours remain in places undefined, so speak with the Church's warmth and the Church's care, and let St. John Paul II's meditation carry the pastoral weight.

Then the finish, in four moves the group must be allowed to discover. Move one: I thirst (19:28), the thirst that answers the well; the one who asked a broken woman for a drink at Jacob's well now asks creation from the cross, and the Catechism's teaching that his asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us (2560) reaches its summit here, with Psalm 69:21's vinegar in the sponge. Move two: the sponge is raised on hyssop (19:29), and hyssop is not a stage prop; it is the Exodus 12:22 instrument, the branch Israel used to apply the lamb's blood to her doorposts, now raised to the lips of the Lamb. Move three: *tetelestai* (19:30), it is finished, it is accomplished, and here the leader opens a seal held since Session 11: the word is the root of 13:1's *eis telos*, he loved them to the end; the Book of Glory opened with love-to-the-telos and closes with the telos declared complete, one telos root, bent from phrase to verb, bracketing the Passion; and having said it, he bowed his head and handed over his spirit, active voice, 10:18 kept to the letter. Move four (19:31-37): the soldiers break the legs of the other two and find Jesus already dead, and John cites the Scripture fulfilled: not a bone of him shall be broken, the wording of the Passover rubric (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12), the evangelist laying the study's answer face up on the table; and a soldier's spear opens his side, and at once there came out blood and water, the living water thread resolved at last (7:38-39, from within him shall flow rivers), the sacramental fountain the Fathers never tired of naming, Baptism and Eucharist from the opened side, the new Eve drawn from the sleeping Adam's side, the Church born (CCC 766, 1225), with Zechariah's they shall look on him whom they have pierced quoted and the eyewitness standing surety: he who saw it has borne witness (19:35). After the group has walked all four moves, and only then, conduct the opening of the guesses; the full ceremony script is in Part 2. Last, the burial (19:38-42): Joseph of Arimathea, and, resolve the arc your group has watched since Session 4, Nicodemus, who had at first come to him by night, now comes publicly, in the open, carrying a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, a royal quantity, to bury the King; the man who came out of the night finished the journey. And the tomb is in a garden: the story that began wrong in a garden is being set right in one, and the garden has one scene left that does not belong to tonight.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

- **Exodus 12:1-13, 21-23, 46, and 12:8.** The Passover lamb entire: without blemish, its blood applied with hyssop, not a bone broken, and, the Session 7 seal now deployable, its flesh eaten. The ceremony's backbone.

- **Isaiah 52:13-53:12.** The servant, lifted up and glorified, led like a lamb to the slaughter (53:7). John quoted 53:1 at 12:38; tonight the neighborhood is unsealed.
- **Genesis 22:1-14.** God will provide himself the lamb (22:8): Isaac carrying the wood up the hill, the Father providing what Abraham's hand was spared. Hedged typology, devastating in the ceremony.
- **Psalms 22:18 and Psalm 69:21.** Garments divided and lots cast; vinegar for my thirst. Quoted in the text itself.
- **Zechariah 12:10.** They shall look on him whom they have pierced, quoted at 19:37, with mourning as for a first-born son.
- **Genesis 2:21-22 and Genesis 3.** The woman drawn from the sleeping man's side; the garden where it all went wrong. Leader background for the pierced side and the garden inclusio.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Melito of Sardis (died c. 180), On the Pascha

Within a lifetime of the beloved disciple's death, Melito preached the oldest surviving Easter homily, and it is one long unsealing of tonight's guesses: it is he who was the Passover of our salvation; he was led like a lamb and slain like a sheep; he ransomed us from the slavery of the world as from the land of Egypt. The lamb of Exodus, Melito says, was the sketch; the Lord is the portrait, and when the portrait arrives the sketch has done its work. The Church was proclaiming Christ as the true Pascha within living memory of the apostles.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Doctor of the Church, Tractates on the Gospel of John, Tractate 120

On the opened side, Augustine reaches back to the first pages of Scripture: the first Adam slept, and from his side God formed the woman; the second Adam slept upon the cross, and from his side flowed the blood and water from which his Bride, the Church, is formed. The evangelist, Augustine notes, chose his verb carefully: the spear did not wound or strike the side but opened it, as one opens a door, and through that opened door flow the sacraments without which there is no entering the life that is true life.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. John Paul II (1920-2005), Redemptoris Mater

On behold your mother, John Paul II lingers over John's phrase that the disciple took her into his own, eis ta idia: not merely into his house, but into everything that makes up his inner life, his discipleship, his interiority. The entrusting is mutual and from the cross: the Mother is given to the disciple, and the disciple to the Mother, and because the beloved disciple stands unnamed, every disciple whom Jesus loves is invited into the same exchange. The pope who took Totus tuus for his motto lived this entrusting as addressed to himself, and taught the Church to do the same.

Catechism Connection

- **CCC 608.** The Baptist's Lamb of God reveals Jesus as both the suffering Servant who silently allows himself to be led to the slaughter and the Paschal Lamb, symbol of Israel's redemption at the first Passover. The study's thesis, stated by the Church.

- **CCC 766.** The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving, signified by the blood and water which flowed from the opened side of the crucified Jesus, as Eve was formed from the side of the sleeping Adam.
- **CCC 964.** Mary's union with her Son at the cross, where she stood in keeping with the divine plan, and where Jesus gave her as mother with the words, Woman, behold your son.
- **CCC 1225.** The blood and water from the pierced side as types of Baptism and the Eucharist, the sacraments of new life; from then on it is possible to be born of water and the Spirit.
- **CCC 2605.** The words from the cross gathered as prayer: all the troubles of humanity taken into the dying Son's voice, through to it is finished and the handing over of his spirit.

Thread Watch

THREAD WATCH

TONIGHT NEARLY EVERYTHING RESOLVES. Walk the board before the session and know your payoffs cold: the Hour (kept as appointment, 19:14 and following); I AM (final absolute use, 18:6, the cohort falls; Peter's ouk eimi as the dark antiphon); lifted up and glorified (enacted); the Woman (Cana to cross, 19:26); the Hour as labor (16:21 stands beside 19:25-27: the anguish and the birth); living water (19:34, blood and water); eis telos to tetelestai (13:1 to 19:30, unseal it at the word); Nicodemus (night to daylight, 19:39); the garden (Eden, arrest, burial; one garden scene remains, sealed); the sixth hour (4:6 and 19:14; thirst at the well and thirst on the cross, John timestamping the well and the sentence and letting the second thirst fall past the hour, unseal it at 19:14); and the Lamb, in the ceremony.

The charcoal fire (HOLD). Anthrakia occurs twice in the New Testament: 18:18 and one more place. Say only, remember this fire. The second fire belongs to the final session, and it is worth the wait.

The bridegroom (RESOLVES IN THE CEREMONY). The ceremony's last movement lands the wedding arc: Cana's bridegroom, the bride wooed at the well, the Church born from the side, and the invitation spoken at every Mass, which joins John 1:29 to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Do not spend it early.

Thomas and Peter (HOLD). Thomas is absent tonight and Peter is broken. Both have appointments in Session 14. Promise the group nothing except that the Gospel is not finished with either.

Session Goals

1. Participants hear the final egō eimi flatten the cohort and Peter's ouk eimi answer it across the courtyard.
2. Participants grasp John's chronology precisely: Preparation Day, the sixth hour, the Lamb sentenced as the city turns to the afternoon slaughter of its lambs, and weigh the Synoptic difficulty at full strength.
3. Participants receive behold your mother as addressed to the unnamed disciple, and therefore to themselves, with the Church's warmth and care.

4. Participants walk the four moves of the finish, the thirst, the hyssop, tetelestai, and the unbroken bones with the opened side, and watch John himself cite the Passover lamb's rubric.
5. Participants open their sealed guesses together and receive the full convergence, ending at the words of every Mass: Behold the Lamb of God.

Time Note (90 minutes)

Opening prayer and a single brief Win, 8 minutes. Build with the Passion proclaimed in parts, 55 minutes. THE OPENING OF THE GUESSES, 15 minutes, protected absolutely. Send, Live It, and closing prayer, 12 minutes. Pre-chosen cuts, in order: the seamless tunic discussion (one sentence), the chapter 17 question's unity portion (already covered in Session 9), and the Dig Deeper. Do not cut, under any circumstances: the garden egō eimi, the ouk eimi antiphon, the two timestamps, the steelman, behold your mother, the four moves of the finish, or the ceremony. If the evening threatens to run long, shorten your own commentary, never the text and never the ceremony.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Leader prays aloud: Father, the hour has come. Tonight we walk with your Son from the garden to the garden, from the courtyard fire to the opened side, carrying guesses we sealed thirteen weeks ago. Give us the courage to watch, the honesty to see, and the grace, at the end, to behold. We ask it through Christ our Lord, the Lamb. Amen.

Win (one question only tonight)

1. Have you ever finally understood something you had carried a long time without understanding, a phrase, a gift, an inheritance, a name? What was it like when it opened?

Transition: Hold that feeling. Everyone place your sealed guess on the table in front of you, face down, unopened. It stays there until near the end. Assign the Passion parts now: a narrator, a reader for Christ, one or two for the other voices. We begin with a prayer we are permitted to overhear.

Build (inductive discovery)

Question 1. Read John 17:1-5, 17-19, and 24-26 aloud, slowly. Three catches. Verse 1: which two of our oldest threads fuse in the first sentence? Verse 5: which session of this study is Jesus quoting, so to speak, back to the Father? And verse 19: the verb consecrate is the verb for setting apart priests and victims for sacrifice. In every sacrifice Israel ever offered, those were two different beings. What is Jesus telling us about tomorrow?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son: the Hour and the glory, fused one final time, in prayer. Verse 5, the glory which I had with thee before the world was made, is the Prologue praying in the first person: in the beginning was the Word, spoken now as memory and request. And verse 19: for their sake I consecrate myself. The priest consecrates the victim, and the victim is himself; the High Priestly Prayer is precisely named, and tomorrow's altar is a hill outside the wall. Note also verse 3 and give it silence: eternal life is defined, and the definition is knowing, a relationship, not a location. And the unity petitions the group weighed in Session 9 stand here in their home: that they may be one, even as we are one, the prayer the Church has been both answering and failing ever since, which is why we pray it at every Mass.

Question 2. Proclaim 18:1-11 in parts. Then: where does John stage the arrest, and why might this evangelist care? What question does Jesus ask the mob, and where has this Gospel asked it before? And the moment itself: what exactly does Jesus answer, and what happens to a cohort of armed men when he says it? What does that tell you about every scene that follows tonight?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

A garden. John never names Gethsemane; he says garden, because his story knows where stories go wrong: sin entered in a garden, and this Gospel will arrest its redeemer in one, bury him in one (19:41), and, but that is not tonight. Whom do you seek: the bracket of the whole Gospel, first words to the first disciples, what do you seek (1:38), asked now of the mob with torches, hunting the Light

of the world with lamps. And the answer: egō eimi, I AM, the final absolute use on our tally, and they drew back and fell to the ground: the Name spoken in the dark flattens a cohort. Write the entry and let it stand: no one arrests this man; he is not captured, he surrenders on terms, let these men go, the shepherd shielding sheep with his own untouchability, and the cup is accepted before a single charge is read: shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me? Read every scene tonight through 10:18: nothing will be taken; everything will be laid down.

Question 3. Proclaim 18:15-27 in parts. Listen with the board's ears. The doorkeeper asks Peter if he is a disciple; the Greek of his answer is ouk eimi. Set that against what Jesus just said in the garden, and against a melody the Baptist sang in Session 2. Then two plants come due: what is the fire made of, and what sound ends the scene? And notice what John does not record.

ANSWER: share after the discussion

The Gospel's most devastating antiphon: inside, before the high priest, stands the one who said I AM and flattened soldiers; outside, at the fire, his best friend says I am not, ouk eimi, twice. The Baptist said I am not in humility, pointing away from himself to Christ; Peter says it in fear, pointing away from Christ to save himself, the same words, inverted. And the fire: a charcoal fire, anthrakia, a word that appears exactly twice in the entire New Testament, here, and in one more place this study has not reached. Say only this to the group: remember this fire. Then the third denial, and at once the cock crowed: the bird of Session 11, precisely on the schedule the Lord gave. John records no bitter weeping; he lets the crow land and cuts away, and the silence is deliberate, because this evangelist is keeping something for Peter, and it involves the second fire. Not tonight.

Question 4. Proclaim 18:28-40 and 19:1-16 in parts. Two timestamps are the hinge of our whole study; do not let them slip past. First, 18:28: why will the accusers not enter the praetorium, and what does that tell us about where the Passover meal is, on John's clock? Second, 19:14: what day is it, what hour is it, and, unseal a board secret, where has this Gospel given us that hour once before? Then, leader teaches: what began in the temple at that hour on that day? And weigh the last exchange: Behold your King, answered how, by whom?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

They stay outside so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover: on the plain surface of John's clock, Friday morning, the Passover meal is still ahead, and so the lambs not yet slain. Then 19:14: the day of Preparation of the Passover; about the sixth hour. Unseal the clock: this Gospel contains exactly two sixth hours, a tired man asking a Samaritan woman for a drink at Jacob's well (4:6), and this one, and thirst frames both: the tired ask at the well, and, past the far end of this one, I thirst (19:28). And the sixth hour of Preparation Day is the threshold: from midday the feast took over the city, and through the afternoon that followed the priests slaughtered the Passover lambs for all Jerusalem, thousands upon thousands. As the city turns to its lambs, the true Lamb is sentenced in the praetorium. Pilate cries Behold your King, the study's own verb, behold, and Israel's chief priests answer with the most terrible sentence they ever spoke: we have no king but Caesar, renouncing the kingship of God at the very hour of the lambs. Every detail is now load-bearing, which is exactly why the strongest objection to John's clock deserves its hearing before we go one verse further.

Steelman: Do John and the Synoptics Contradict on the Date?

BUILD THE STEELMAN FIRST: present this at full strength

The skeptical case is serious and centuries old. Mark says plainly: on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the passover lamb, the disciples prepared, and that evening Jesus ate the Last Supper (Mark 14:12-17); in the Synoptics, the Last Supper is the Passover meal, and Jesus dies the following afternoon, after the lambs. John, as we have just seen, has the meal still future on Friday morning (18:28) and Jesus sentenced at the sixth hour of Preparation Day (19:14), dying as the lambs die. Both cannot be right, the argument runs; and since John's dating produces perfect lamb symbolism, the obvious conclusion is that John moved the date for theology, history bent to make a point, and if he bent this, the eyewitness claims of 19:35 and 21:24 bend with it. The whole edifice our sealed guesses are about to celebrate, the critic says, is built on an adjusted clock. State it without flinching; the difficulty is real, ancient, and acknowledged by believing scholars.

Question 5 (press from the text). Four probes. First, honesty: is the difficulty real, and does faith require pretending otherwise? Second, the calendar question: was there only one way to reckon Passover in first-century Judea? Third, the oldest witness: a decade or two before any Gospel was written, what did St. Paul already call Christ, in 1 Corinthians 5:7? Fourth: does an eyewitness with a theological pen stop being an eyewitness?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

First, yes, the tension is real, and Catholic scholarship says so out loud; pretending otherwise builds faith on sand, and this study has never done that with manuscripts, authorship, or anything else. Second, no: first-century Judea, on serious reconstructions, ran more than one liturgical clock. Pharisees and Sadducees are on record disputing festal reckonings; some scholars have argued that Galileans and Judeans reckoned the day differently, though that reconstruction is contested; and the Essenes of Qumran kept a 364-day solar calendar on which Passover fell on a fixed weekday. On several proposed reconstructions, none of them demonstrated and all of them debated, Jesus ate a true Passover meal by an earlier legitimate reckoning, exactly as the Synoptics describe, and died as the temple's official lambs were slain, exactly as John describes, both clocks true, one Lord bridging them. Others note that eat the passover in 18:28 can denote the festival's continuing sacrificial meals, not only the seder. The Church has defined none of these solutions, and honesty holds them with open hands. Third, and decisively for the symbolism charge: Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed, wrote St. Paul to Corinth around the year 56, before, on standard datings, any Gospel had been written. The Lamb identification is not John's late invention requiring an adjusted clock; it is the Church's primal confession, earlier than the Gospels' standard dates, and John's chronology at most sharpens what the whole apostolic generation already proclaimed. Fourth: John timestamps with named pools, named porticoes, named officials, and archaeology has corroborated named details, Bethesda's porticoes and Siloam among them; a witness who selects and arranges true details to show their meaning is called an author, not a fabricator, and every evangelist, every historian, and every one of us telling our own conversion story does the same. On any of these honest readings, the clock is no fabrication, and the witness stands. Now we may go to the cross.

Question 6. Proclaim 19:17-24 in parts. Two details to weigh briefly. The titulus: what three languages, and, remember who came asking in chapter 12, who can read it now? And Pilate's refusal to amend it:

whose pattern is he unknowingly repeating? Then the tunic: what is odd about it, and what garment does the oddity recall?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Hebrew, Latin, and Greek: covenant, empire, and the world. The Greeks who said we wish to see Jesus can now read the proclamation posted over his head, in their own tongue: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. And what I have written I have written places Pilate beside Caiaphas in the Gospel's gallery of accidental prophets: the truth keeps getting proclaimed by its enemies, on schedule. The tunic is without seam, woven from top to bottom, indivisible except by destruction, and Josephus describes the high priest's robe in nearly the same words; many Fathers heard the priesthood of the crucified in the soldiers' dice game, with Psalm 22:18 quoted underneath. Hold it lightly and move; the mother is waiting.

Question 7. Proclaim 19:25-27, and then be quiet for a moment before asking anything. Now: the mother of Jesus appears exactly twice in this entire Gospel. Where was the first time, what did he call her there, and what did he say about the Hour? What does he call her now that the Hour has come? Set 16:21 beside this scene: what did Jesus say about a woman, anguish, and her hour? And the disciple: why might this Gospel never give him a name, and what did he do from that hour?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Cana and Calvary: Woman, my hour has not yet come, and now, in the Hour itself, Woman, behold your son. The bracket the group has carried since Session 3 closes: the Woman stands at both ends of the Hour, and the evangelist who rewrote Genesis in his first sentence knew what the word Woman weighs, the mother of all the living standing at the tree. And 16:21 stands beside her: when a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come, but joy follows the birth. At the foot of the cross, in the anguish of the Hour, something is being born: a new family, the mother and the disciple given to each other, the Church in embryo, drawn into existence by the dying breath of her Lord. And the disciple is never named, and the Church's oldest instinct is that the anonymity is a doorway: every disciple whom Jesus loves is invited to stand in his place, hear behold your mother addressed personally, and do what he did: from that hour the disciple took her into his own, eis ta idia, not merely into his house but into everything that makes up his life, as St. John Paul II loved to say. The Church reads Mary's motherhood of all beloved disciples here (CCC 964); receive her, and let anyone in the room who has never known what to do with Mary hear it simply: she was a gift, given from the cross, in the last will of a dying man, and refusing bequests from that particular will is not our custom.

Question 8 (live discovery). Proclaim 19:28-30. Three moves, walk them slowly. Move one: I thirst; where has this Gospel shown us his thirst before, and at what hour? Move two: the sponge is raised on what kind of branch? Send half the group to Exodus 12:21-23 right now and ask them: what was hyssop for? Move three: the final word, one word in Greek, tetelestai; the leader now opens a seal held since Session 11: what phrase in 13:1 shares its root, and what does the bracket mean? And the last clause: what does he do with his spirit, and which verse of chapter 10 is being kept?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Move one: the well. At the sixth hour of chapter 4 he sat thirsty and asked a broken woman, give me

a drink, and the Catechism says his asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us (2560); now, at the far end of the other sixth hour, he thirsts aloud from the cross, and the desire is the same desire: us. Psalm 69's vinegar comes up in the sponge. Move two: hyssop, and the group has just read what hyssop is: the branch Israel dipped in the blood of the Passover lamb to apply it to her doorposts, so that death would pass over. The blood applicator of Exodus 12 is raised to the lips of the Lamb, and John names the plant because he expects his reader to know the rubric. Move three: tetelestai, it is finished, accomplished, completed, and the seal: 13:1 said he loved his own eis telos, to the end, to completion, and 19:30 declares the telos reached; one root, telos, deliberately echoed, brackets the entire Book of Glory: loved to the end, and the end is now finished. What is finished? The Scriptures, the Passover, the Hour, the work the Father gave, and the love, which turned out to have no point at which it said this far and no further. And then: he bowed his head and handed over his spirit, active voice, a giver to the last breath. No one took his life. He laid it down (10:18), exactly as he said, and even the dying was a deed.

Question 9 (live discovery). Proclaim 19:31-37. The soldiers break the legs of the two others and find Jesus already dead. John says Scripture was fulfilled: not a bone of him shall be broken. Send the other half of the group to Exodus 12:46 and read it aloud to everyone. Whose rubric is that, and who is telling us it has been kept? Then the spear: what flows from the opened side, which of our oldest threads just resolved, and what did the Fathers, and the Catechism, see flowing? And verse 35: on whose word does all of this rest?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Exodus 12:46 is the Passover lamb's own rubric: you shall not break a bone of it, and the one telling us it has been kept in Jesus' body is the evangelist himself, quoting the Scripture whose home is the Passover rubric (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12, with Psalm 34:20 in harmony), laying the study's answer face up on the table. John has stopped hinting. Then the spear opened his side, Augustine noted the verb, opened, like a door, and at once there came out blood and water: the living water thread, planted at a well, cried at Tabernacles, glossed as the Spirit awaiting the glorification, resolves here; out of his heart flow rivers (7:38), now that he is glorified, and the Fathers and the Catechism name the streams: the water of Baptism and the blood of the Eucharist, the sacramental life of the Church, flowing from the opened side (CCC 1225), the new Eve drawn from the side of the sleeping Adam, the Church born at the cross (CCC 766). Zechariah is quoted over the scene: they shall look on him whom they have pierced. And verse 35: he who saw it has borne witness, his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth. An eyewitness, standing close enough to see the two streams, staking his Gospel on it. Now, and only now, tell everyone to pick up their sealed guess.

THE OPENING OF THE GUESSES

CEREMONY: conduct this without hurry

Everyone holds their sealed guess from Week One. Say: thirteen weeks ago, before you knew anything, you wrote your answer to one question: why is Jesus called the Lamb of God? Open them now. Go around the circle; each person reads their guess aloud, exactly as written, no editing, no apologizing. Honor every guess; most will contain real fragments of the answer. When the circle

completes, walk the convergence, counting on your fingers, slowly:

One: the Baptist cried Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, and never explained it, and neither did we. Two: John counted Passovers, three of them, the whole Gospel running on a Passover clock. Three: at the second Passover, Jesus said the bread which I shall give is my flesh, and would not soften it, because, hear now what was sealed since Session 7, the Passover lamb of Exodus 12 was not merely slain; the command was, they shall eat the flesh (Exodus 12:8); a Passover you did not eat was a Passover you did not keep. Four: Isaiah sang of a servant lifted up and glorified, led like a lamb to the slaughter (53:7), and John began quoting that very song as the Hour turned. Five: the sentence fell at the sixth hour of Preparation Day, as the city turned to the afternoon-long slaughter of its lambs. Six: the sponge came up on hyssop, the lamb's-blood applicator of the first Passover. Seven: not a bone of him was broken, the lamb's own rubric, cited by the eyewitness himself. Eight: and reach all the way back, when Isaac carried the wood up the hill and asked his father where the lamb was, Abraham answered, God will provide himself the lamb (Genesis 22:8); Abraham's hand was stayed, and the promise waited two thousand years for a Father who would not stay his own; hold it with open hands, and let it break your heart. Nine: the blood of the first lambs was applied to doorposts so that death would pass over; the blood of this Lamb is applied to people, and death itself passes over into life. Ten, and stand for this one if your group will bear it: at every single Mass, at the invitation to Communion, the priest raises the Host and says the Baptist's unexplained cry, Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world, and then joins it to the wedding this whole Gospel has been planning since Cana, blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb. The bridegroom of Cana, the bride wooed at the well, the Church born from the opened side, and the marriage supper announced over every altar on earth: the study's two great arcs are one arc, and you are invited to the wedding, this Sunday, and the Lamb, as at the first Passover, is not merely beheld. He is eaten. Your guesses were sealed for thirteen weeks. The Church's answer has been in plain sight at every Mass of your life.

Question 10. One scene remains tonight. Proclaim 19:38-42. Two men bury Jesus. The second one: who is he, what is he carrying, how much of it, and, check the board, when did we first meet him, at what time of day, and what were we told to watch for? And where is the tomb?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Nicodemus, who had at first come to him by night. The board has watched this man since Session 4: by night with careful questions (chapter 3), a lone procedural voice in the council (7:50), and now publicly, in the open, with the death sentence still warm, he comes to bury the condemned man, carrying a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, a burial fit for a king, an unmissable public act. The man who came out of the night finished the journey into the light, exactly as 3:21 promised: he who does what is true comes to the light. The arc resolves; let the group applaud him a little, he has earned it across ten weeks of their watching. And the tomb is in a garden: the story that began to go wrong in a garden is being set right in one, arrest in a garden, burial in a garden, and, say only this, gardens in this Gospel are not finished. Bring nothing next week but yourselves. It is the last session, and it begins before dawn.

DIG DEEPER

The daily lambs. For the week's pondering: besides the Passover, the temple offered a lamb every

morning and every evening, the tamid, the continual offering (Exodus 29:38-42), so that a lamb was always on the altar for Israel. The Lamb of God takes up even this: the Church has loved to see in her daily Mass the tamid's fulfillment: not new sacrifices multiplied, but the one sacrifice made present without lapse, morning and evening, until he comes.

Synthesis question. Simply this, and let everyone answer: this Sunday, just before Communion, the priest will raise the Host and say the words. What will you hear now that you could not hear fourteen weeks ago?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Let every person answer in their own words and resist the urge to improve on them. You are listening for the study's whole cargo arriving in the present tense: the Baptist's cry, the three Passovers, the hard saying at Capernaum, the sixth hour, the hyssop, the unbroken bones, the opened side, the wedding invitation, and a sealed guess thirteen weeks old finally answered by the Church's oldest sentence. If someone says, I will hear the whole Gospel of John in one sentence, or simply, I will actually behold, then the study has done what it was built to do, and there is exactly one session left, because the Lamb, as it turns out, is not finished speaking.

Send

1. You now know what Behold the Lamb of God costs and contains. Concretely, what will be different about your next Communion, your preparation, your Amen, your thanksgiving after?
2. The beloved disciple stands unnamed, the Church has always noticed, as if to leave room for you, and from the cross you were handed a mother. Honestly: will you take her eis ta idia, into your own, and what would that look like in your actual week?

Live It This Week

- **Behold, knowing everything.** This Sunday, when the priest raises the Host before Communion and says Behold the Lamb of God, behold: look at the Host with everything you now know, the hyssop, the bones, the sixth hour, the opened side, and make your Lord, I am not worthy the most honest sentence of your week. Then go to the supper of the Lamb.
- **Take her into your own.** Every day this week, pray the Memorare, or one decade of the Rosary, as your act of accepting the bequest of 19:27. She was given to you from the cross; a week of daily hello is the least a son or daughter can do.
- **Ten minutes at the foot.** Once this week, sit before a crucifix, at church or at home, and read John 19:25-37 slowly at its foot. Stop at the hyssop, stop at tetelestai, stop at the opened side. You have never read it as the person you are now; go find out who that is.

Closing Prayer

Leader prays aloud: Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, we sealed our guesses and you kept your secret, and tonight you opened both. You were slain at the hour of the lambs, lifted on the wood Isaac carried, given vinegar on the branch that once painted doorposts with blood, and not one of your bones was broken. From your opened side you gave us the font and the chalice, and from your cross you gave us your mother. It is finished; and we are only beginning to understand. Behold us, Lamb

of God, as we have finally learned to behold you. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture Memory Verse

MEMORIZE AGAIN: John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (RSV2CE)

You memorized this verse in Week Two, when it was a mystery. Say it every day this week, now that it is not. They are the same words; you are not the same reader.

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Every passage used or referenced in Session 13, in order of appearance. Flag these in your Bible before the session, and flag the Exodus passages twice.

- **John 17:1-5, 17-19, 24-26** · the High Priestly Prayer: the Hour and glory, pre-existent glory, I consecrate myself, eternal life defined (17:3)
- **John 18:1-11** · the garden, whom do you seek, the final egō eimi (18:6), the cup
- **John 18:15-27** · ouk eimi twice, the charcoal fire (anthrakia), the cock crow
- **John 18:28-40** · that they might eat the passover; kingship not of this world; what is truth
- **John 19:1-16** · the mock coronation, behold the man, Preparation Day, the sixth hour (19:14), no king but Caesar
- **Mark 14:12-17** · steelman text, the Synoptic dating; cite or read aloud in the steelman
- **1 Corinthians 5:7** · press text, Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed, older than all Gospels
- **John 19:17-24** · the titulus in three languages, the seamless tunic, Psalm 22:18 in text
- **John 19:25-27** · BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER: the Woman, the disciple, eis ta idia; set 16:21 beside it
- **John 19:28-30** · I thirst (compare 4:6-7), the hyssop, tetelestai (compare 13:1), handed over his spirit
- **Exodus 12:21-23** · live discovery, hyssop and the blood on the doorposts
- **John 19:31-37** · the unbroken bones, the opened side, blood and water, Zechariah 12:10, the eyewitness (19:35)
- **Exodus 12:46** · live discovery, you shall not break a bone of it; cited by John himself (19:36)
- **Exodus 12:8** · CEREMONY: they shall eat the flesh; the Session 7 seal, deployed at last
- **Isaiah 53:7 and 52:13** · CEREMONY: the lamb led to slaughter; lifted up and glorified
- **Genesis 22:1-14** · CEREMONY: God will provide himself the lamb; hedged, and devastating
- **Exodus 29:38-42** · Dig Deeper, the tamid, the daily lambs
- **Revelation 19:9** · CEREMONY: blessed are those called to the marriage supper of the Lamb; joined to John 1:29 at every Mass
- **John 19:38-42** · Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in daylight; the garden tomb
- **CCC 608, 766, 964, 1225, 2560, 2605** · Catechism connections