

Take-Home 3: The First Passover

What We Found

Reading Exodus 12 slowly, we reconstructed the Passover from the text itself: a lamb without blemish, chosen on the tenth day and kept with the family until the fourteenth; killed at twilight by the whole assembly; its blood on the doorposts; and then the command almost everyone forgets: they shall eat the flesh that night (Exodus 12:8). The blood went to the doorpost; the flesh, by command, went to the table: eating the lamb was an indispensable, commanded part of the rite.

God commanded the day to be kept as a memorial, a feast throughout the generations, for ever (Exodus 12:14), and we left Moriah with Isaac's question still open: where is the lamb? (Genesis 22:7-8).

Voices of the Church

St. Melito of Sardis (d. c. 180)

In his ancient Paschal homily (*Peri Pascha*), Melito preached, in summary, that the mystery of the Passover is new and old: old according to the law, new according to the Word; the sheep was the model, and the Lord the reality.

St. John Chrysostom (d. 407)

In summary: the old Passover was the type and the new its truth. That lamb delivered from Egypt for a time; this Lamb delivers the whole world from death forever. Those who eat the true Lamb should live like a people who have left Egypt.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

In the *Summa Theologiae* (III, q. 73, a. 6), Aquinas gave the Passover lamb pride of place among the figures of this sacrament; and his hymn *Lauda Sion* names the figures: Isaac offered, the paschal lamb appointed, the manna given to the fathers.

Live It This Week

- Read Exodus 12:1-14 once more and memorize the sequence: chosen, kept, killed, blood, eaten, forever.
- At Mass this Sunday, when you hear Behold the Lamb of God, remember Isaac's question and let it be your own: where is the lamb?
- Before next session, ask one older Catholic in your life what the word memorial in the Mass means to them, and just listen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. 1 Corinthians 5:7

Before Next Session

Read Deuteronomy 8:1-10, Moses's charge to remember the Lord who fed Israel in the wilderness.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 608, 1150, 1363-1364.