



The Holy See

LEO XIV

GENERAL AUDIENCE

St. Peter's Square

Wednesday, 6 August 2025

[Multimedia]

Cycle of Catechesis – Jubilee 2025. Jesus Christ our Hope. III. The Passover of Jesus. 1. *The preparation of the supper. “Make the preparations for us there” (Mk 14:15)*

Dear brothers and sisters,

Let us continue our Jubilee journey in the discovery of the face of Christ, in whom our hope takes shape and consistency. Today we will start to reflect on the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. Let us begin by meditating on a word that seems simple but holds a precious secret of Christian life: *prepare*.

In the Gospel of Mark, it is told that “on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, ‘Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?’” (Mk 14:12). It is a practical question, but also filled with anticipation. The disciples perceive that something important is about to happen, but they do not know the details. Jesus’ answer seems almost to be a riddle: “Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water” (v. 13). The details become symbolic: a man carrying a jar, a typically feminine gesture at that time; an upstairs room already prepared; an unknown host. It is as if everything has been arranged in advance. In fact, this is exactly the case. In this episode, the Gospel shows that love is not the result of chance, but of a conscious choice. It is not a simple reaction, but a decision that requires preparation. Jesus does not face his passion out of fatalism, but out of fidelity to a path freely and carefully accepted and followed. This is what comforts us:

knowing that the gift of his life stems from conscious intention, not a sudden impulse.

That “upstairs room already prepared” tells us that God always precedes us. Even before we realize we need to be welcomed, the Lord has already prepared a space for us where we can recognize ourselves and feel we are his friends. This place is, fundamentally, our heart: a “room” that may seem empty, but which awaits only to be recognized, filled and cherished. The Passover, which the disciples must prepare, is in reality already present in Jesus’ heart. He has already thought of everything, arranged everything, decided everything. However, he asks his friends to do their part. This teaches us something essential for our spiritual life: grace does not eliminate our freedom, but rather awakens it. God’s gift does not eliminate our responsibility, but makes it fruitful.

Today too, like then, there is a supper to prepare. It is not only a matter of the liturgy, but of our readiness to enter into a gesture that transcends us. The Eucharist is not celebrated only at the altar, but also in daily life, where it is possible to experience everything as an offering and giving of thanks. To prepare to celebrate this thanksgiving does not mean doing more, but leaving room. It means removing what encumbers us, reducing our demands and ceasing to hold unrealistic expectations. Indeed, too often we confuse preparations with illusions. Illusions distract us; preparations guide us. Illusions seek a result; preparations make an encounter possible. True love, the Gospel reminds us, is given before it is reciprocated. It is an anticipatory gift. It is not based on what is received, but on what one wishes to offer. It is what Jesus lived with his disciples: while they still did not understand, while one of them was about to betray him and another to deny him, he was *preparing* a communion supper for them all.

Dear brothers and sisters, we too are invited to “prepare the Passover” of the Lord. Not only the liturgical one: that of our life too. Every gesture of willingness, every gratuitous act, every forgiveness given in advance, every effort patiently accepted, is a way to prepare a place where God can dwell. We can ask ourselves, then: what spaces in my life do I need to put in order so that they are ready to receive the Lord? What does it mean for me today to “prepare”? Perhaps to renounce a demand, to stop waiting for others to change, to take the first step. Perhaps to listen more, to act less, or to learn how to trust in what has already been prepared.

If we accept the invitation to prepare the place of communion with God and among ourselves, we will discover we are surrounded by signs, encounters and words that guide us towards that room, spacious and already prepared, in which the mystery of an infinite love, sustaining us and always preceding us, is celebrated unceasingly. May the Lord grant us to be humble preparers of his presence. And, in this daily readiness, may that serene trust also grow in us, allowing us to face everything with a free heart. Because where love has been prepared, life can truly flourish.

Special greetings:

I extend a warm welcome to all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those coming from South Africa, Vietnam, Canada, United States of America. During summer, a time normally set aside for holidays and recreation, let us not neglect the Lord's invitation to prepare our hearts by actively participating in the Eucharist and by doing generous acts of charity. May God bless you all!

Summary of the Holy Father's words:

Dear brothers and sisters: today, in our continuing catechesis on the Jubilee theme of "Christ our Hope," we begin our reflection on Jesus' passion, death and resurrection by considering the importance of preparing for an encounter with God. In the passage we just read, the disciples were surprised to find that the upper room had already been made ready for them to celebrate the Passover. We are invited to discover here an image of our own hearts, chosen and set aside by the Lord as a place of encounter with him. First, however, we must respond to the Lord's initiative by preparing our hearts through concrete acts of love, forgiveness and self-giving so that he may come and dwell within us. By asking for our cooperation he reminds us that true love — like the Passion itself — is not the result of chance, but a conscious and free decision to give of oneself. Let us ask the Lord today to teach us how prepare for his presence and so be able to welcome him, and those around us, into our hearts.

APPEAL

Today marks the eightieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of the Japanese city of Hiroshima, and in two days' time we will remember that of Nagasaki. I wish to assure my prayers to all those who have suffered its physical, psychological and social effects. Despite the passing of the years, those tragic events constitute a universal warning against the devastation caused by wars and, in particular, by nuclear weapons. I hope that in the contemporary world, marked by strong tensions and bloody conflicts, the illusory security based on the threat of mutual destruction may give way to the tools of justice, to the practice of dialogue, and to trust in fraternity.