

598. The Passover Supper.

9th March 1945.

The suffering of Maundy Thursday is beginning.

The apostles, there are ten of them, are bustling about preparing the Supper-room.

Judas, who has climbed on the table, is watching whether there is oil in all the lamps of the big chandelier that looks like the corolla of a double fuchsia, because its stem is surrounded by five lamps in small vessels similar to petals, and under them, there is another circle or crown of small flames, and finally, there are three thin lamps hanging from tiny chains resembling the pistils of the bright flower. He then jumps down on the floor and helps Andrew to lay the tableware in an artistic style on the table, on which a very fine table-cloth has been spread.

I hear Andrew say: « What a wonderful linen tablecloth! » And the Iscariot says: « One of Lazarus' best ones. Martha insisted in bringing it. »

« And what about these chalices and these amphorae? » remarks Thomas, who has poured some wine into the precious amphorae and is admiring them, looking at himself in their slim bellies, and he caresses the chiselled handles with the eye of a connoisseur.

« Phew! I wonder how much they are worth! » exclaims Judas Iscariot.

« It is worked by hammer. My father would go mad for it. Silver and gold-foils are shaped easily when heated. But done with such craft... Everything can be spoiled in a moment. One wrong blow is enough. It takes strength and a light hand at the same time. See the handles? They have been shaped out of the block. They are not soldered. Things for rich people... Just consider that all the filings and cast-off parts are lost. I don't know whether you understand me. »

« Phew! I understand you very well. In short, it is like sculpture. »

« Exactly. »

They all admire and then go back to their work. Some arrange the seats, some prepare the sideboards.

Peter and Simon come in together.

« Oh! You have come at last! Where have you been again? After you came with the Master and us, you ran away again » says the Iscariot.

« We had another errand before supper-time » replies Simon briefly.

« Are you suffering from depression? »

« I think there is every reason to be so, considering what we have heard these past days, and from those lips that we have never found to be false. »

« And with that stench of... Well, be quiet, Peter » grumbles Peter between his teeth.

« And you as well!... You seem to have gone mad for some time. Your face is like that of a wild rabbit that realises it is being chased by a jackal » replies Judas Iscariot.

« And your face is like the snout of a weasel. You have not been very handsome either, these last few days. You look in such a way... You are even cross-eyed... What do you expect or do you hope to see? You seem to be self-confident, you want to appear so, but you look like one who is afraid » retorts Peter.

« Oh! With regard to being afraid!... You are not a hero either! »

« None of us is, Judas. You have the name of the Maccabee, but you are not such. I, with my name, say "God grants graces", but I swear to you that I tremble like a man who knows that he brings mischance and above all that he has lost God's favour. Simon of Jonah, renamed "the stone", is now as soft as wax near a fire. He no longer gets the weather-gauge of his own free-will. And yet I have never seen him frightened in the most violent storms! Matthew, Bart and Philip look like sleep-walkers. My brother and Andrew do nothing but sigh. The two cousins, who are grieved because of their family ties and of their love for the Master, look at them. They already look like old men. Thomas has lost his cheerfulness. And Simon seems to have become again the exhausted leper of three years ago, so much is he worn out by grief, I would say that he is worn away, deathly pale, dejected » John replies to him.

« Yes. He has influenced us all with His melancholy » remarks the Iscariot.

« My cousin Jesus, my Master and Lord and yours, is and is not melancholy. If you mean, by that word, that He is sad because He is being excessively grieved by the whole of Israel, as we are aware, and because of the other hidden sorrow that He alone sees, I say to you: "You are right". But if you use that word to say that He is mad, I forbid you to do so » says James of Alphaeus.

« And is a fixed melancholy idea not madness? I have studied also profane matters and I know. He has given too much of Himself. Now He is mentally tired. »

« Which means insane. Is that right? » asks the other cousin Judas, who is apparently calm.

« Exactly! How right was your father, a man of blessed memory, whom you resemble so much in justice and wisdom! Jesus, the sad destiny of an illustrious family now too old and struck by psychic senility, has always had a disposition to this illness. Mild at first, then more and more aggressive. You have seen how He attacked Pharisees and scribes, Sadducees and Herodians. He has made His life impossible, like a road strewn with quartz splinters. And He spread them Himself. We... we have loved Him so much that our love veiled our eyes. But those who did not love Him in an idolatrous manner - your father, your brother Joseph and at first also Simon - saw right... When we heard their words we should have opened our eyes. Instead we were all enticed by His meek charm of a sick person. And now... Who knows! »

Judas Thaddeus, who is as tall as the Iscariot, and is standing just in front of him and seems to be listening to him peacefully, has an outburst of rage and, with a mighty backhanded blow, knocks Judas down with his back on one of the seats, and with anger repressed in his voice, bending over the face of the coward who does not react, as he is probably afraid that Thaddeus may be aware of his crime, he whispers: « This is for His insanity, you reptile! And only because He is in the other room, and this is Passover evening, I will not strangle you. But remember this, and remember it carefully! If any evil befalls Him, and He is not there to check my strength, no one will save you. The halter is as good as round your neck, and these strong honest hands of mine, the hands of a Galilean artisan and of a descendant of Goliath's slinger, will do the job for you. Get up, you spineless debauchee! And watch how you behave. »

Judas stands up, he is livid, but does not react in the least. And, what amazes me, no one reacts to the new gesture of Thaddeus. On the contrary!... It is obvious that they all approve of it.

The room has just become calm again when Jesus come in. He appears on the threshold of the little door, through which His tall person can just pass, He sets foot on the small landing, and with His meek sad smile He says, opening His arms: « Peace be with You. » His voice is tired, like that of one who is languishing physically and morally.

He comes down. He caresses the fair-haired head of John, who has rushed towards Him. He smiles at His cousin Judas, as if He did not know anything, and He says to His other cousin: « Your mother asks you to be kind to Joseph. He asked the women after you and Me a little while ago. I am sorry I have not greeted him. »

« You will do it tomorrow. »

« Tomorrow?... I shall always have time to see him... Oh! Peter! We shall be together for a little while at last! Since yesterday you seem a will-o'-the-wisp. I see you, then I no longer see you. Today I can almost say that I lost you. And you, too, Simon. »

« Our hair, which is more white than dark, can assure You that we were not absent craving for flesh » says Simon gravely.

« Although... at all ages it is possible to suffer from that hunger... The old! Worse than the young... » says the Iscariot offensively.

Simon looks at him and is about to reply. But Jesus also looks at him and says: « Have you a toothache? Your right cheek is swollen and red. »

« Yes, it is aching. But it is not worth worrying about. »

The others do not say anything, and the matter dies away.

« Have you done everything that was to be done? You, Matthew? And you, Andrew? And you, Judas, have you seen to the offer for the Temple? »

Both the first two and the Iscariot say: « Everything You said was to be done today, has been done. Do not worry. »

« I took the early fruits of Lazarus to Johanna of Chuza. For the children. They said to me: "Those apples were better!" They had the savour of hunger, those ones! And they were Your apples » says John smiling and dreaming.

Jesus also smiles at the recollection...

« I have seen Nicodemus and Joseph » says Thomas.

« You have seen them? Did you speak to them? » asks the Iscariot with excessive interest.

« Yes, I did. What's strange about it? Joseph is a good customer of my father. »

« You never mentioned it before... That is why I was amazed!... » Judas tries to make up for the impression, he had given previously, of his worry about Thomas' meeting with Joseph and Nicodemus.

« It seems strange to me that they have not come to venerate You. They did not, neither did Chuza, nor Manaen... None of... »

But the Iscariot laughs sneeringly, interrupting Bartholomew, and he says: « The crocodile hides itself at the right moment. »

« What do you mean? What are you insinuating? » asks Simon aggressively as never before.

« Peace, peace! What is the matter with you? It is Passover evening! We have never had such a worthy display for the consumption of the lamb. So let us consume the supper in the spirit of peace. I see that I have upset you considerably with My instructions of these last evenings. But, see? I have finished! Now I will not upset you any more. Not everything has been said of what refers to Me, but only the essential part. The rest... you will understand later. You will be told... Yes. There will come Who will tell you! John, go with Judas and somebody else to get the basins for the purification. And then let us sit at the table. » Jesus is heart-rendingly kind.

John with Andrew, Judas Thaddeus with James, bring the large basin, they pour water into it and offer the towel to Jesus and to their companions, who do the same for them. The basin (which is a metal wash-hand-basin) is placed in a corner.

« And now to your seats. I here, and here (at His right side) John, and on the other side My faithful James. The first two disciples. After John My strong Stone, and after James he who is like the air. He is never noticed, but is always present and comforting: Andrew.

Beside him, My cousin James. You are not sorry, My kind brother, if I give the first place to the first ones? You are the nephew of the Just One, whose spirit palpitates and quivers over Me this evening, more than ever. Have peace, father of My childish weakness, oak-tree in whose shadow the Mother and Son had solace! Have peace!... Beside Peter, Simon... Simon, come here a moment. I want to fix My eyes on your loyal face. Later I shall not see you well, because others will cover your honest face. Thank you Simon, for everything » and He kisses him.

Simon, when he is left free, goes to his seat, covering his face with his hands for a moment, with a gesture of distress.

« Facing Simon, My Bart. Two honest wise men reflecting each other. They match very well. And beside him, you, Judas, My brother. So I can see you... and I seem to be at Nazareth... when some festivity gathered us all together round one table... Also at Cana... Do you remember? We were together. A party... a wedding party... the first miracle... water changed into wine... Also today a festivity... and also today there will be a miracle... the wine will change its nature and will be... »

Jesus becomes engrossed in His thoughts, His head lowered and isolated in His secret world. The others look at Him and do not speak.

He raises His head again and stares at Judas Iscariot, to whom He says: « You will sit in front of Me. »

« So much You love me? More than Simon, since You always want me in front of You? »

« So much. As you said. »

« Why, Master? »

« Because you are the one who has done more than everybody for this hour. »

Judas casts an ever-changing glance at the Master and at his companions. At Jesus with ironical commiseration, at the others with an air of triumph.

« And near you, on one side Matthew, on the other Thomas. »

« So, Matthew on My left and Thomas on My right side. »

« As you wish, as you like » says Matthew. « It is enough for me to have my Saviour in front of me. »

« Last, Philip. Now, see? Who is not beside Me in the place of honour, has the honour of being in front of Me. »

Jesus, standing in His place, pours wine into the large chalice placed in front of Him (they all have tall chalices, but He has a much larger one, in addition to one like those of the others. It must be the ritual chalice). He pours wine into it, He raises it, He offers it and lays it on the table.

Then all together they ask in the tone of a psalm: « Why this ceremony? » A formal question, obviously, a ritual one.

To which Jesus, as head of the family, replies: « This day reminds us of our liberation from Egypt. Blessed be Jehovah Who created the fruit of the vineyard. »

He takes a sip of the wine He has offered and passes the chalice to the others. He then offers the bread, He breaks it into morsels and hands it round with the herbs dipped in the reddish sauce contained in four sauce-boats.

When this part of the meal is over, they sing some psalms, all together.

The large tray with the roasted lamb is brought from the sideboard to the table and placed in front of Jesus.

Peter, who acts as... first voice of the chorus, if you wish so, asks: « Why this lamb, as it is? »

« In remembrance of the time when Israel was saved through the sacrificial lamb. No first-born died where the blood shone on doorposts and lintels. And afterwards, while the whole of Egypt, from the royal palace to hovels, was mourning the dead first-born males, the Hebrews, led by Moses, moved towards the land of liberation and of the promise. With their sides girded, their feet shod, the pilgrim's staffs in their hands, the people of Abraham started off promptly, singing hymns of joy. »

They all stand up and intone: « When Israel came out of Egypt and the house of Jacob from a barbarous people, Judah became his sanctuary » etc. (if I have found the right one, it is psalm 113).

Jesus now cuts the lamb, He pours wine into the chalice again, and He passes it round after drinking of it. Then they sing also: « Children, praise the Lord, blessed be the Name of the Eternal now and for ever throughout ages. From east to west it is to be praised » etc. (but I cannot find it).

Jesus hands out the portions, ensuring that everybody is well served, just like a father of a family among his children who are all dear to him. He is solemn, somewhat sad, when He says: « I have longed to eat this Passover with you. It has been the desire of My desires since,

from eternity, I was "the Saviour". I knew that this hour precedes that one. And the joy of giving Myself, brought this relief, in advance, to My suffering... I have longed to eat this Passover with you, because never again shall I taste the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God has come. Then I will sit again with the elect at the Banquet of the Lamb, for the wedding of the Living Ones with the Living One. But only those who have been lowly and pure in heart, as I am, will come to it. »

« Master, a short while ago You said that he who has not the honour of the seat, has that of being in front of You. So, how can we know who is the first among us? » asks Bartholomew.

(1) These words are addressed to Maria Valtorta's spiritual father.

« Everybody and nobody. Once... we were coming back and we were tired and... nauseated at the bitter hatred of the Pharisees. But you were not so tired as to be prevented from discussing among yourselves who was the greatest... A little boy ran up to Me... a little friend of Mine... And his innocence mitigated My disgust for so many things. Your obstinate humanity not being the last. Where are you now, little Benjamin gifted with the wise reply, that came to you from Heaven because, as you were an angel, the Spirit spoke to you? Then I said to you: "If anyone wants to be the first, he must be the last and the servant of everybody". And I gave you the wise boy as an example. Now I say to you: "The kings of nations dominate them. And although the peoples oppressed hate them, they acclaim them and kings are called 'Benefactors', 'Fathers of the Fatherland'. But hatred smoulders under the false homage". But do not let it be so with you. The greatest must be like the smallest, the head like him who serves. Who is in fact greater? He who sits at the table, or he who serves? It is he who sits at the table. And yet I serve you. And before long I will serve you even more. You are the ones who have been with Me in My trials. And I will arrange a place for you in My kingdom, in the same manner as I shall be King in it according to the will of the Father, that you may eat and drink at My eternal table and you may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. You have remained with Me in My trials... This is the only thing that makes you great in the eyes of the Father. »

« And what about those who will come? Will they have no place in the Kingdom? We alone? »

« Oh! How many princes in My House! All those who have been faithful to the Christ in the trials of life, will be princes in My Kingdom. Because those who have persevered to the end in the martyrdom of life will be like you, who have remained with Me in My trials. I identify Myself with those who believe in Me. The Sorrow that I embrace for you and for all men, I give it as insignia to those who are particularly chosen. He who is faithful to Me in Sorrow will be one of My souls in bliss, My beloved. »

« We have persevered until the end. »

« Do you think so, Peter? And I tell you that the hour of trial is still to come. Simon, Simon of Jonas, Satan has asked to sift you all like wheat. I have prayed for you, that your faith may not vacillate. When you have recovered, strengthen your brothers. »

« I know that I am a sinner. But I will be faithful to You until death. I do not have that sin and I will never have it. »

« Do not be proud, My Peter. This hour will change an infinite number of things, which previously were so and will now be different. How many!... They bring and impose new

necessities. You are aware of that. I have always said to you, even when we were going along remote places infested by highwaymen: "Be not afraid. No evil will befall us, because the angels of the Lord are with us. Do not worry about anything". Do you remember when I used to say to you: "Do not worry about what you must eat and about your clothes. The Father knows what we need"? I also used to say to you: "Man is much more than a sparrow and a flower that today is grass and tomorrow is hay. And yet the Father takes care both of the flower and of the little bird. So can you doubt that He will not take care of you?" I also used to say: "Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone offends you, offer him the other cheek as well". I also used to say: "Take no bag or stick". Because I taught love and trust. But now... Now the times have changed. Now I say to you: "Have you ever been short of anything so far? Have you ever been offended?". »

« Nothing, Master. You alone were offended. »

« So you can see that My word was true. But now the angels have all been recalled by their Lord. It is the hour of demons... With their golden wings the angels of the Lord are covering their eyes and enveloping themselves and they regret that the colour of their wings is not a gloomy one, because it is time of mourning, of cruel sacrilegious mourning... There are no angels on the Earth this evening. They are near the throne of God, to drown the blasphemies of the deicide world and the weeping of the Innocent. And we are alone... You and I: alone. And the demons are the masters of the hour. So we shall now take the appearances and the measures of poor men who do not trust and do not love. Now, he who has a purse should take also a haversack, he who has no sword should sell his cloak and buy one. Because this also is said of Me in the Scriptures and must be fulfilled: "He has been counted among the wicked". Truly everything that concerns Me has its purpose. »

Simon, who has got up and gone to the chest where he put his rich mantle - because this evening they are all wearing their best clothes, and so on their sumptuous belts they are carrying daggers, damaskened but very short ones, more like knives than daggers - takes two swords, two real, long, slightly bent swords and returning to Jesus with them he says: « Peter and I have armed ourselves this evening. We have these, but the others have only short daggers. »

Jesus takes the swords, examines them, He unsheathes one of them and tests its edge on His nail. It is a strange sight, and even more strangely impressive to see that cruel weapon in Jesus' hands.

« Who gave them to you? » asks the Iscariot, while Jesus is examining them and is silent. And Judas seem to be on tenter-hooks...

« Who? I remind you that my father was a noble and mighty man. »

« But Peter... »

« So? Since when have I to give an account of the presents that I want to give my friends? »

Jesus raises His head after sheathing the sword again. He hands it back to the Zealot.

« All right. They are enough. You did well in taking them. "But now, before drinking the third chalice, wait a moment. I told you that the greatest is the same as the smallest and that I am acting as a servant at this table, and I will serve you even more. So far I have given you food. A service for your bodies. Now I want to give you food for your spirits. It is not a dish of the

ancient rite. It belongs to the new rite. I wanted to be baptised before being the "Master". That baptism was sufficient to spread the Word. Now His Blood will be shed. Another ablution is required for you, although you have been purified by the Baptist, in his days, and also today in the Temple. But it is not yet sufficient. Come, that I may purify you. Interrupt your meal. There is something more elevated and necessary than the food given to the stomach to fill it, even if it is holy food as the present one of the Passover rite. And it is a pure spirit, ready to receive the gift of Heaven, which is already descending to make its throne in you and give you the Life. To give the Life to those who are pure. »

Jesus stands up, He makes John stand up to come out of His place more easily, He goes to the chest and takes off His red tunic and folds it placing it on His mantle, which is there already folded, He girds Himself with a large towel and He goes towards another basin, which is empty and clean. He pours some water into it, He takes it to the middle of the room, near the table, and puts it on a stool. The apostles look at Him dumbfounded.

« Are you not asking Me what I am doing? »

« We do not know. I tell You that we are already purified » replies Peter.

« And I repeat to you that it does not matter. My purification will serve him, who is already pure, to become purer. »

He kneels down. He unties the Iscariot's sandals and washes his feet, one at a time. It is easy to do so, because the couches are made in such a way that the feet are in the outer side. Judas is astonished and does not say anything. Only when Jesus, before putting the sandal on the left foot and getting up, makes the gesture of kissing his right foot, that has already been shod, Judas withdraws his foot violently and with the sole strikes the divine mouth. He does so unintentionally. It is not a strong blow. But it grieves me so much. Jesus smiles, and to the apostle who asks Him: « Did I hurt You? I did not intend to... Forgive me », He says: « No, My friend. You did it without malice and it does not hurt. » Judas looks at Him... A worried elusive look...

Jesus passes on to Thomas, then to Philip... He goes round the narrow side of the table and arrives at His cousin James. He washes his feet and when getting up He kisses him on his forehead. He passes on to Andrew, who blushes with shame and makes efforts not to weep, He washes his feet and kisses him like a baby. Then there is James of Zebedee, who goes on grumbling: « Oh! Master! Master! Master! You are lowering Yourself, my sublime Master! » John has already untied his sandals and while Jesus is bent drying his feet, he kisses His head.

But Peter!... It is not easy to convince him to submit to the rite! « You want to wash my feet? Do not even think about it! As long as I live, I will never allow You to do that. I am a worm, You are God. Each to his own place. »

« You cannot understand now what I am doing. Later you will understand. Let Me do it. »

« You can do anything You like, Master. Do You want to cut my neck? Do so. But You will never wash my feet. »

« Oh! My Simon! Do you not know that if I do not wash you, you will take no part in My Kingdom? Simon, Simon! You are in need of this water for your soul and for the long journey

you have to take. Do you not want to come with Me? If I do not wash you, you will not come to My Kingdom. »

« Oh! my blessed Lord! Then, wash all my body! Feet, hands and head! »

« Anyone who, like you, has had a bath, needs only to have his feet washed, as he is completely pure. The feet... Man walks with his feet on filth. And it would not be much either, because, as I told you, it is not what enters and comes out with food that dirties, and it is not what settles on his feet on the roads that contaminates man. But it is what smoulders and matures in his heart and comes out from it, which contaminates his actions and limbs. And the feet of a man with an impure spirit go to orgies, to lust, to illicit business, to crimes... Therefore, among the various parts of the body they are the ones that have much to be purified... with the eyes and mouth... Oh! man! man! A perfect being for one day: the first one! And then so corrupted by the Seducer! And there was no malice in you, man, no sin!... And now? You are all malice and sin, and there is no part in you that does not sin! »

Jesus has washed Peter's feet, He kisses them, and Peter weeps and takes Jesus' two hands in his own big ones and he rubs them against his eyes and then kisses them.

Simon also has taken off his sandals, and without one word he lets Jesus wash his feet. Then, when Jesus is about to pass on to Bartholomew, Simon kneels down and kisses His feet saying: « Cleanse me from the leprosy of sin, as You cleansed me from the leprosy of my body, that I may not be confused in the hour of judgement, my Saviour! »

« Be not afraid, Simon. You will come to the heavenly City as white as mountain snow. »

« And what about me, Lord? What are You going to say to Your old Bart? You saw me in the shade of the fig-tree and You read my heart. And now what do You see, and where do You see me? Reassure a poor old man, who is afraid he may not have strength and time to become what You want him to be. » Bartholomew is deeply moved.

« You must not be afraid either. I then said: "Here is a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit". Now I say: "Here is a true Christian worthy of the Christ". Where do I see you? On an eternal throne, dressed in purple. I shall always be with you. »

It is Judas Thaddeus' turn. When he sees Jesus at his feet, he cannot control himself, he rests his head on his arm laid on the table and weeps.

« Do not weep, My sweet brother. You are now like one who must endure the extirpation of a nerve and you think that you will not be able to stand it. But it will be a short pain. Then... oh! you will be happy, because you love Me. Your name is Judas. And you are like our great Judas: like a giant. You are the one who protects. Your actions are those of a lion and of a young roaring lion. You will rouse the impious who will withdraw when you face them, and the wicked will be terrified. I know. Be brave. An eternal union will strengthen and make perfect our kinship in Heaven. » He kisses his forehead as well, as He did for His other cousin.

« I am a sinner, Master. Not me... »

« You were a sinner, Matthew. You are now the Apostle. You are one of My "voices". I bless you. How far have these feet walked to come more and more forward, towards God... Your soul urged them and they left every way that was not My way. Proceed. Do you know where the path ends? On the bosom of your Father and Mine. »

Jesus has finished. He takes the towel off and washes His hands in clean water, He puts His clothes on, goes back to His seat, and while sitting down He says: « You are now pure, but not all of you. Only those who wanted to be so. »

He stares at Judas of Kerioth, who feigns he does not hear Him, intent as he is on explaining to his companion Matthew how his father decided to send him to Jerusalem. A useless conversation, the only purpose of which is to give an attitude to Judas, who, however bold, must feel ill at ease.

Jesus pours wine into the common chalice for the third time. He drinks and makes the others drink. He then intones, and the others sing in chorus: « I love because the Lord hears the voice of my prayer, because He turns His ear towards me. I will invoke Him throughout my life. The throes of death had surrounded me » etc. (Psalm 114, I think).

A moment's pause. He then resumes singing: « I had faith, that is why I spoke. But I was deeply humiliated. And in my dismay, I said: "Every man is untruthful". » He looks fixedly at Judas.

My Jesus' voice, which is tired this evening, regains vigour when He exclaims: « The death of holy people is precious in the eyes of God » and « You have broken my chains. I will sacrifice a victim of praise to You invoking the name of the Lord » etc. (Psalm 115).

Another short pause and He then resumes: « Praise the Lord, all nations, praise Him, all peoples. Because His mercy has been asserted upon us and the truth of the Lord lasts for ever. »

Another short pause and then a long hymn: « Sing praises to the Lord because He is good, because His mercy lasts for ever... »

Judas of Kerioth sings so much out of tune, that twice Thomas brings him back into tune with his powerful loud baritone voice and stares at him. The others also look at him, because he is generally in tune, and I have had the impression that he is proud of his voice as he is of everything else. But this evening! Certain sentences upset him so much that he sings false notes, and certain glances of Jesus underlining those sentences have the same effect. One of them is: « It is better to confide in the Lord than to confide in man. » Another one is: « When I was pushed, I staggered and was about to fall. But the Lord supported me. » Another is: « I shall not die, I shall live and narrate the deeds of the Lord. » And finally, these two, that I am going to relate now, strangle the Traitor's voice in his throat: The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone and « Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! »

When the psalm is over, while Jesus is cutting and handing the lamb round again, Matthew asks Judas of Kerioth: « Are you not feeling well? »

« No. Leave me alone. Don't worry about me. »

Matthew shrugs his shoulders.

John, who has heard, says: « The Master is not well either. What is the matter with You, my Jesus? Your voice is weak, like the voice of a sick person or of one who has wept much » and he embraces Him, resting his head on Jesus' chest.

« He has only spoken a lot, as I have only walked a lot and got cold » says Judas nervously.

And Jesus, without replying to him, says to John: « You know Me by now... and you know what makes Me tired... »

The lamb is almost consumed. Jesus, Who has eaten very little, and has only had a sip of wine at each chalice, but to compensate for that, has drunk a lot of water, as if He were feverish, resumes speaking: « I want you to understand My gesture of a short while ago. I told you that the first is like the last, and that I am going to give you a food that is not corporeal. I have given you a nourishment of humility, for your spirits. You call Me: Master and Lord. You are right, because so I am. So if I have washed your feet you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example, so that you may do what I have done. I tell you solemnly: no servant is greater than his master, no apostle is greater than He Who appointed him. Try to understand these things. Then, if you understand them and put them into practice, you will be blessed. But not all of you will be blessed. I know you. I know whom I chose. I am not speaking of everybody in the same way. But I say what is true. On the other hand, what has been written concerning Me, is to be fulfilled: "He who eats the bread with Me, rebels against Me". I am telling you everything before it happens, that you may have no doubts about Me. When everything has been accomplished, you will believe even more that I am I. He who receives Me, receives Him Who sent Me: the Holy Father Who is in Heaven; and he who receives those whom I send, will receive Me. Because I am with the Father and you are with Me... But now let us finish the rite. »

He pours more wine into the common chalice and before drinking of it and letting the others drink, He stands up, and everybody stands up with Him, and He sings one of the previous psalms again: « I had faith and that is why I spoke... » and then He sings a psalm that never comes to an end. Beautiful... but eternal! I think I have found it, by its beginning and its length, as psalm 118. They sing it as follows. They sing one part in chorus. Then, in turns, one recites a couplet, and the others in chorus sing another part, and so forth till the end. No wonder they are thirsty at the end!

Jesus sits down. He does not lie down. He sits as we do. And He says: « Now that the old rite has been accomplished, I will celebrate the new one. I have promised you a miracle of love. It is time to work it. That is why I have longed for this Passover. From now on this is the Victim that will be consumed in a perpetual rite of love. My beloved friends, I have loved you throughout the whole life of the Earth. I have loved you for the whole eternity, My children. And I want to love you till the end. There is nothing greater than this. Bear that in mind. I am going away. But we shall remain for ever united through the miracle that I will now work. »

Jesus takes a loaf still entire and places it on the chalice that has been filled. He blesses and offers both, He then breaks the bread and takes thirteen morsels of it, and gives one to each apostle saying: « Take this and eat it. This is My Body. Do this in remembrance of Me, Who am going away. » He gives the chalice and says: « Take this and drink it. This is My Blood. This is the chalice of the new alliance in My Blood and through My Blood, that will be shed for you, to remit your sins and give you the Life. Do this in remembrance of Me. »

Jesus is very sad. There is no smile, no trace of light, no colour on His face. It is already an agonizing face. The apostles look at Him utterly anguished.

Jesus stands up saying: « Do not move. I shall be back at once. »

He takes the thirteenth morsel of bread and the chalice, and He goes out of the Supper-room.

« He is going to His Mother » whispers John.

And Judas Thaddeus says with a sigh: « Poor woman! »

Peter asks in a very low voice: « Do you think She knows? »

« She knows everything. She has always been aware of everything. »

They all speak in very low voices, as if they were in front of a corpse.

« But do you think that really... » asks Thomas, who does not want to believe yet.

« And do you doubt it? It is His hour » replies James of Zebedee.

« May God grant us strength to be faithful » says the Zealot.

« Oh! I... » says Peter who is about to speak. But John, who is on the look-out, says: « Silence! He is here. »

Jesus comes back in. He has the empty chalice in His hands. Only at its bottom there is a trace of wine, and in the light of the chandelier it looks just like blood.

Judas Iscariot, in front of whom is the chalice, looks at it as if he were enchanted, then he averts his eyes. Jesus watches him and shudders, and John, leaning as he is on His chest, feels it. « Why not say so! You are shivering... » he exclaims.

« No. I am not shivering because I am feverish... I have told you everything, and I have given you everything. I could not have given you anything else. I have given you Myself. »

He makes His usual kind gesture with His hands, which, previously joined, now separate and stretch out, while He bows His head as if He wished to say: « Excuse Me if I cannot give you more. It is so. »

« I have told you everything and I have given you everything. And I repeat. The new rite has been accomplished. Do this in remembrance of Me. I have washed your feet to teach you to be humble and pure like your Master. Because I solemnly tell you that disciples must be like their Master. Remember that, bear it in mind. Also when you are in high offices, remember that. There is no disciple greater than his Master. As I washed you, do the same to one another. That is, love one another like brothers, helping and respecting one another, setting an example to one another. And be pure, to be worthy of eating the living Bread that descended from Heaven, and have the strength, in yourselves and through It, to be My disciples in the hostile world that will hate you because of My Name. But one of you is not pure. One of you will betray Me. My Spirit is deeply perturbed by that... The hand of him who will betray Me is here with Me on this table, and neither My love, nor My Body and Blood, nor My word make him mend his ways and repent. I would forgive him going to My death also on his behalf. »

The disciples cast terrified glances at one another. They scrutinise one another suspiciously. Peter stares at the Iscariot in a revival of all his doubts. Judas Thaddeus in his turn jumps to his feet to look at the Iscariot above Matthew's body.

But the Iscariot is so sure of himself! In his turn he looks at Matthew, as if he suspected him. He then looks fixedly at Jesus and smiling he asks: « Is it I perhaps? » He seems to be the one who is most certain of his honesty and to say so, not to let the conversation drop.

Jesus repeats His gesture saying: « You are saying so, Judas of Simon, not I. You are saying so. I have not mentioned your name. Why are you accusing yourself?-Ask your internal warner, your conscience of a man, the conscience that God the Father gave you that you might behave as a man, and listen whether it accuses you. You will be the first to know. But if it reassures you, why do you utter a word and speak of a deed that is anathema even to mention or to think of as a joke? »

Jesus is speaking calmly. He seems to be supporting a proposed thesis as a learned man may do with his pupils. The confusion is great, but Jesus' calm appeases it.

But Peter, who is the most suspicious of Judas - perhaps Thaddeus also is so, but he does not look so, disarmed as he is by the Iscariot's easy manners - plucks John's sleeve, and when John, who has pressed against Jesus upon hearing Him speak of betrayal, turns round, he whispers to him: « Ask Him who it is. »

John takes his previous position again, he only raises his head slightly, as if he wanted to kiss Jesus, and in the meantime, he whispers in His ear: « Master, who is it? »

And Jesus in a very low voice, kissing him, in His turn, on his head, says: « It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread dipped in the dish. »

And taking another entire loaf, not the remains of the one used for the Eucharist, He detaches a large morsel, He dips it into the lamb's sauce left in the tray, and says: « Take it, Judas. You like this. »

« Thank You, Master. I do like it » and unaware of what that morsel is, he eats it, while John, horrified, closes even his eyes not to see the horrid smile of the Iscariot, as he bites the accusing bread with his strong teeth.

« Well. Now that I have made you happy, go » says Jesus to Judas. « Everything has been accomplished, here (He lays much stress on the word). What is still left to be done elsewhere, do it quickly, Judas of Simon. »

« I will obey You at once, Master. Then I will join You at Gethsemane. You are going there, are You not? As usual? »

« Yes... I am going there... as usual. » « What has he got to do? » asks Peter. « Is he going by himself? »

« I am not a baby » says Judas scoffingly, as he puts on his mantle.

« Let him go. He and I know what must be done » says Jesus.

« Yes, Master. » Peter is silent. Perhaps he thinks he has committed a sin suspecting his companion. Resting his forehead on the palm of his hand, he becomes pensive.

Jesus presses John to His heart and whispers again through his hair: « Say nothing to Peter for the time being. It would be a useless scandal. »

« Goodbye, Master. Goodbye, friends » says Judas greeting them.

« Goodbye » replies Jesus.

And Peter says: « Goodbye, boy. »

John, his head almost on Jesus' lap, whispers: « Satan! » Jesus alone hears him and sighs.

Everything comes to an end here, but Jesus says: « I am interrupting the vision out of pity for you. I will give you the end of the Supper later. »

(the Supper continues)

There are a few moments of dead silence. Jesus has lowered His head, caressing John's fair hair mechanically.

Then He rouses Himself. He raises His head, He looks around, and He smiles in such a way that encourages the disciples. He says: « Let us leave the table and sit all close to one another, like many children round their father. »

They take the couches that were behind the table (those of Jesus, John, James, Peter, Simon, Andrew and His cousin James) and they put them on the other side.

Jesus sits on His own, still between James and John. But when He sees that Andrew is about to sit in the place left by the Iscariot, He shouts: « No, not there. » An impulsive shout, that His great prudence does not succeed in preventing. He then modifies His expression saying: « We do not need so much room. If we sit down, we can stay only on these. They are enough. I want you to be very close to Me. »

Now, with respect to the table, they are placed in a U shaped disposition, with Jesus in the centre and the table, on which there are no victuals now, and Judas' place in front of Him.

James of Zebedee calls Peter saying: « Sit here. I will sit on this little stool, at Jesus' feet. »

« May God bless you, James! I wanted it so much! » says Peter and he presses against his Master, Who is now squeezed by John and Peter, with James at His feet.

Jesus smiles and says: « I see that the word spoken earlier is beginning to work. Good brothers love one another. James, I also say to you: "May God bless you". Also this action of yours will not be forgotten by the Eternal, and you will find it up there.

I can obtain everything I ask for. You have seen that. A desire of Mine was sufficient for the Father to allow His Son to give Himself in Food to man. The Son of man has been glorified by what has happened now, because the miracle that is possible only to God's friends is a witness of power. The greater the miracle, the surer and deeper is this divine friendship. This is a miracle that, because of its form, duration and nature, and of the extremes and limits it attains, is so great that a greater one cannot possibly exist. I tell you: it is so powerful, supernatural, inconceivable by proud men, that only very few will understand it as it is to be understood, and many will deny it. So what shall I say? Condemn them? No. I will say: have mercy on them!

But the greater the miracle, the greater the glory of its author. It is God Himself Who says: "See, My beloved wanted it, had it, and I granted it, because great is His grace in My eyes". And here He says: "His grace has no limits, as infinite is the miracle performed by Him". The glory that from God comes to the author of the miracle is the same as the glory that from the author returns to the Father. Because every supernatural glory, as it comes from God, returns to its source. And the glory of God, although it is already infinite, increases and shines more and more through the glory of His saints. So I say: as the Son of man has been glorified by

God, so God has been glorified by the Son of man. I have glorified God in Myself. In His turn, God will glorify His Son in Himself. He will glorify Him shortly.

Exult, o spiritual Essence of the Second Person, Who are going back to Your See! Exult, o Body Who are going to ascend again after such a long exile in degradation. And not Adam's Paradise, but the sublime Paradise of the Father is about to be given to You as Your abode. If it has been said that the amazing order of God, given through the lips of a man, stopped the sun, what will happen among the stars when they see the wonder of the Body of the Man ascend and sit at the right hand of the Father in the Perfection of His glorified being?

My little children, I will remain with you for a short time. And afterwards you will be looking for Me as orphans look for their dead parent. And weeping, you will go about speaking of Him and in vain you will knock at His silent tomb, and you will also knock at the blue gates of Heaven, with your souls elevated in suppliant search for love, saying: "Where is our Jesus? We want Him. Without Him there is no more light in the world, no joy, no love. Either give Him back to us, or let us come in. We want to be where He is". But for the time being you cannot come where I am going. To the Judaeans also I said: "Later you will look for Me, but you cannot come where I am going". I say the same to you.

Think of My Mother... Neither can She come where I am going. And yet, I left the Father to come to Her and become Jesus in Her immaculate womb. And yet, I came from the Inviolable Woman in the bright ecstasy of My Birthday. And I was nourished with Her love, that became milk. I am made of purity and love, because Mary nourished Me with Her virginity fecundated by the perfect Love Who lives in Heaven. And yet, I have grown up through Her, costing Her fatigue and tears... And yet, I ask of Her such heroism as no one has ever accomplished, and in comparison with which the heroism of Judith and that of Jael are the heroisms of poor women quarrelling with the rival at the village fountain. And yet, no one loves Me as She does. And, notwithstanding all that, I will leave Her and go where She will come only after a long time. The commandment I give you: "Sanctify yourselves year by year, month by month, day by day, hour by hour, to be able to come to Me when it is your hour" does not apply to Her. She is full of grace and holiness. She is the creature who has had everything and has given everything. There is nothing to be added or to be taken away. She is the most holy witness of what God can do.

But in order to be sure that you are able to join Me and to forget the grief in mourning the separation from your Jesus, I give you a new commandment. And it is: love one another. As I have loved you, you must love one another. By this love it will be known that you are My disciples. When a father has many sons, how does one know that they are such? Not so much by their physical appearance - because there are men who are in everything like another man, with whom there is no blood-tie and they are not even of the same country - as by their common love for the family, for their father and for one another. And even when the father dies, a good family does not break up, because one is their blood and it is the same they had from the seed of their father, and it ties in knots that not even death loosens, because love is stronger than death. Now, if you love one another after I have left you, everybody will acknowledge you as My children, and therefore as My disciples, and as brothers to one another, having had only one father. »

« Lord, but where are You going? » asks Peter.

« I am going where at present you cannot follow Me. But you will follow Me later. »

« And why not now? I have always followed You since You said to me: "Follow Me". I left everything without regret... Now, to go away without Your poor Simon, leaving me without You, Who are everything to me, after that for Your sake I left the little property I had previously, is not fair or nice of You. Are You going to Your death? All right. I will come as well. We shall go to the next world together. But I will have defended You before that. I am ready to give my life for You. » « You will give your life for Me? Now? Not now. I solemnly - oh! I do solemnly tell you - before the cock crows, you will have disowned Me three times. This is the first watch. Then the second will come... and then the third. Before the cock crows loudly, you will have disowned your Lord three times. »

« Impossible, Master! I believe everything You say, but not that. I am sure of myself. »

« Now, at present, you are sure. Because you still have Me. You have God with you. Before long, the Incarnate God will be caught, and you will no longer have Him. And Satan, after making you heavy - your very certainty is a trick of Satan, ballast to weigh you down - will frighten you. He will insinuate to you: "God does not exist. I do". And as you will still be able to reason, although made dull by fear, you will understand that, when Satan is the master of the hour, Good is dead and Evil is active, the spirit is dejected and the human is triumphant. You will then be like warriors without a leader, chased by the enemy, and in the dismay of being defeated you will bow your necks to the conqueror, and in order not to be killed you will disown the fallen hero. But, please do not let your hearts be upset. Believe in God. And believe also in Me. Believe in Me, against all appearances. Let him who remains and him who runs away believe in My mercy and in the Father's. Both he who is silent and he who moves his lips to say: "I do not know Him". And likewise believe in My forgiveness. And believe that, whatever your actions may be in future, in Good and in My Doctrine, consequently in My Church, they will give you equal places in Heaven. In the house of My Father there are many abodes. If it were not so, I would have told you. Because I am going ahead, to prepare a place for you. Do good fathers not do likewise when they have to take their little children elsewhere? They go ahead, they prepare the house, the furnishings, the provisions. They then go back to get their dearest ones. They do so out of love, so that the little ones may lack nothing and may not be uncomfortable in the new place. I do the same and for the same reason. I am going now. And when I have prepared a place for each of you in the celestial Jerusalem, I will come again and take you with Me so that you may be where I am, where there is no death or mourning, no tears, no shouting, no hunger, no pain, no darkness, no parching thirst, but only light, peace, happiness and singing. Oh! song of the Highest Heavens when the twelve chosen ones will sit on thrones with the twelve patriarchs of the tribes of Israel and in the ardour of the fire of spiritual love, standing upright over the sea of beatitude, they will sing the eternal song accompanied by the arpeggio of the eternal alleluia of the angelical host... I want you to be where I shall be. And you know where I am going and you know the way. »

« But, Lord! We know nothing. You are not telling us where You are going. How can we know the way to be taken to come towards you and curtail the wait? » asks Thomas.

« I am the Way, the Truth, the Life. You have heard Me say so and explain it several times, and really some people, who did not even know that there is a God, have walked ahead, along My way, and they are already ahead of you. Oh! where are you, lost sheep of God, brought back to the fold by Me? And where are you, whose soul has been raised? »

« Who? Of whom are you speaking? Of Mary of Lazarus? She is in the other room, with Your Mother. Do You want her? Or do You want Johanna? She is certainly in her mansion, but if You wish so, we will go and call her for You... »

« No. Not them... I am thinking of the one who will be revealed only in Heaven... and of Photinai... They found Me. And they have never left My way again. To one I pointed out the Father as the true God and the Spirit as a Levite in this individual adoration. To the other, who did not even know she had a soul, I said: "My name is Saviour, I save whoever has the good will to be saved. I am the One Who looks for those who are lost, I give Life, Truth and Purity. Those who look for Me, will find Me". And they both found God... I bless you, weak Eves who have become stronger than Judith... I am coming, I am coming where you are... You comfort Me... May you be blessed!... »

« Show us the Father, Lord, and we shall be equal to them » says Philip.

« I have been with all of you for such a long time, and you, Philip, still do not know Me? He who sees Me, sees the Father. So, how can you say: "Let us see the Father"? Can you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you, I do not say them by Myself. It is the Father, living in Me, Who accomplishes all My work. And do you, all of you, not believe that I am in the Father and He is in Me? What must I say to make you believe? If you do not believe My words, believe at least in My deeds. And I say to you and I truly say to you: he who believes in Me will perform the deeds that I do, and will perform even greater ones, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask of the Father in My name, I will do it, so that the Father may be glorified in His Son. And I will do anything you ask in behalf of My Name. My Name is known for what it really is, only to Me and to the Father Who generated Me and to the Spirit Who proceeds from our love. And everything is possible to that Name. He who thinks of My Name with love, loves Me and obtains. But it is not sufficient to love Me. It is necessary to keep My commandments in order to have true love. Feelings are testified by deeds. And because of your love I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, so that He may remain with you for ever, One against Whom Satan and the World cannot act cruelly, the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive or strike, because it cannot see Him and does not know Him. The world will deride Him, but He is so sublime that derision will not be able to offend Him, while being so merciful as to exceed all limits, He will always be with those who love Him, even if they are poor and weak. You will know Him, because He already dwells with you and will soon be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I have already told you that I will come back to you. But I will come before it is time to come to take You and go to My Kingdom. I will come to you. Before long the world will no longer see Me. But you see Me and will see Me. Because I live and you live. Because I will live and you will live. On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me and I in you. Because he, who accepts My precepts and observes them, loves Me, and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and will possess God, because God is love, and he who loves has God in himself. And I will love Him, because I shall see God in him, and I will show Myself to him, making him acquainted with the secrets of My love, of My wisdom, of My Incarnate Divinity. They will be My returns among the children of man, whom I love notwithstanding that they are weak and even hostile. But these will be only weak. And I will fortify them; I will say to them: "Rise!", I will say: "Come out!", I will say: "Follow Me", I will say: "Listen", I will say: "Write"... and you are among them. »

« Why, Lord, are You showing Yourself to us and not to the world? » asks Judas Thaddeus.

« Because you love Me and you keep My words. He who does that will be loved by My Father, and we shall come to him and make our home with him, in him. Whereas he who does not love Me, does not keep My words and acts according to the flesh and the world. Now remember that what I said to you is not the word of Jesus of Nazareth, but it is the word of the Father, because I am the Word of the Father Who sent Me. I told you these things, speaking to you thus, because I want to prepare you Myself for the complete possession of the Truth and Wisdom. But you cannot yet understand or remember. But when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit Whom the Father will send to you in My name, comes to you, then you will be able to understand, and He will teach you everything, and He will remind you of what I told you.

I leave you My peace. I give you My peace. I give it to you not as the world gives it. And not even as I have given it to you so far: the blessed greeting of the Blessed One to the blessed ones. The peace I am giving you now is more profound. In this farewell I communicate Myself, My Spirit of peace to you, as I communicated My Body and My Blood to you, so that you may have strength for the imminent battle. Satan and the world are stirring up a war against your Jesus. It is their hour. Have Peace within you, My Spirit, which is spirit of peace, because I am the King of peace. Have it so that you may not be too forlorn. He who suffers with the peace of God within himself, suffers, but does not blaspheme and does not despair.

Do not weep. You have also heard Me say: "I am going to the Father and then I will come back". If you loved Me beyond the flesh, you would rejoice, because I am going to the Father after such a long exile... I am going to Him Who is greater than I am and Who loves Me. I have told you now, before it takes place, as I informed you of all the sufferings of the Redeemer, before going to them, so that, when everything is fulfilled, you may believe more and more in Me. Do not be so upset! Do not be frightened. Your hearts are in need of balance...

I have not much more time to speak to you... but I have so much to say! Now that I have come to the end of My evangelization, I feel that I have not said anything yet, and that there is still so much to be done. Your mood increases My feeling. So, what shall I say? That I failed in My task? Or that you are so hard-hearted that My work has been of no avail? Shall I be in doubt about you? No. I rely on God and I entrust you, My beloved ones, to Him. He will complete the work of His Word. I am not like a father who dies without having any other light but the human one. I hope in God. And, although within Myself I feel the urgency of all the advice, of which I see you are in need, and I realise that time flies, I am going towards My destiny with a quiet mind. I know that the dew is about to descend on the seeds sown in you and it will make all of them spring up, then the sun of the Paraclete will come and they will become mighty trees. The prince of this world, with whom I have nothing to do, is about to come. And if it were not for the purpose of redemption, he would not have had any power over Me. But that is happening so that the world may know that I love My Father and I love Him so much that I will obey Him even to death, and I will, therefore, do what He ordered Me to do.

It is time to go. Stand up. And listen to My last words. I am the true Vine. The Father is the Vinedresser. Every branch that bears no fruit He cuts, and the one that does bear fruit He prunes, to make it bear even more. You are already purified by My word. Remain in Me and I will remain in you to continue to be so. The branch cut off from the vine cannot bear fruit. The same applies to you, if you do not remain in Me. I am the Vine and you are the branches. Whoever remains united to Me bears fruit in plenty. But if one is cut off, one becomes a dry branch and is thrown on the fire and burns there. Because, if you are not united to Me, you can do nothing. So remain in Me and let My words remain in you, then ask for whatever you

want, and it will be done to you. My Father will always be the more glorified, the more you bear fruit and are My disciples.

As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you. Remain in My love that saves. By loving Me you will be obedient, and obedience increases mutual love. Do not say that I am repeating Myself. I am aware of your weakness. And I want you to be saved. I have told you this so that the joy I wanted to give you may be in you and may be complete. Love one another, love one another! This is My new commandment. Love one another more than each of you loves himself. There is no greater love than that of a man who lays down his life for his friends. You are My friends and I will lay down my life for you. Do what I teach and order you to do. I will no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master does, whereas you know what I do. You know everything about Me. I have made known to you not only Myself, but also the Father and the Paraclete, and everything I heard from God. You did not choose yourselves. But I chose you and I elected you, so that you may go among peoples and you may bear fruit in yourselves and in the hearts of those who are evangelized, and your fruit may remain, and the Father may give you everything you will ask of Him in My name.

Do not say: "So, if You chose us, why did You choose a betrayer. If You know everything, why did You do that?" Do not even ask who he is. He is not a man. He is Satan. I said so to My faithful friend and I let My beloved son say so. He is Satan. If Satan, the eternal mimic of God, had not become incarnate in human flesh, this possessed man could not have escaped My power of Jesus. I said: "possessed". No. He is much more: he is annihilated in Satan. »

« Since You have driven demons away, why did you not free him? » asks James of Alphaeus.

« Are you asking that for your own sake, fearing that you are the one? Be not afraid of that. »

« I, then? »

« I? »

« I? »

« Be quiet. I am not mentioning that name. I am being merciful, do likewise. »

« But why did You not defeat him? Could You not do that? »

« I could. But in order to prevent Satan from taking bodily form to kill Me, I should have had to exterminate the human race before Redemption. So what would I have redeemed? »

« Tell me, Lord, tell me! » Peter has fallen on his knees and he shakes Jesus phrenetically as if he were a prey to frenzy. « Is it I? Is it I? Shall I examine my own conscience? I do not think so. But You... You said that I will disown You... And I am quivering... Oh' how horrible if it is I!... »

« No, Simon of Jonah. It is not you. »

« Why are You depriving me of my name "Peter"? So am I Simon again? See? You are saying so!... It is I! But how could I? Tell me tell me, all of you When was it that I became a traitor?... Simon?... John"... Tell me! »

« Peter, Peter, Peter! I am calling you Simon because I am thinking of our first meeting, when you were Simon. And I am thinking how you have always been loyal since the first moment. It is not you. I, the Truth, am telling you. »

« Who, then? »

« It is Judas of Kerioth! Have you not yet understood that? » shouts Thaddeus, who can no longer restrain himself.

« Why did you not tell me before? Why? » shouts Peter as well.

« Silence. It is Satan. He has no other name. Where are you going, Peter? »

« To look for him. »

« Leave that mantle and that weapon at once. Or shall I drive you away and curse you? »

« No, no! Oh! my Lord! But I... but I... Have I become delirious, have I? Oh! Oh! » Peter has thrown himself on the ground and is weeping at Jesus' feet.

« I give you My commandment: love and forgive one another. Have you understood? Even if in the world there is hatred, let only love be in you. For everybody. How many traitors you will find on your way! But you must not hate them and return evil for evil. Otherwise the Father will hate you. I have been hated and betrayed, long before you. And yet, as you can see, I do not hate. The world cannot love what is different from it. Therefore it will not love you. If you belonged to it, it would love you; but you are not of the world, as I took you away from the world. And that is why you are hated.

I said to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well. If they have listened to Me, they will listen to you, too. But they will do everything because of My Name, since they do not know, they do not want to know Him Who sent Me. If I had not come and I had not spoken, they would not be guilty. But now their sin has no excuse. They have seen My deeds, they have heard My words, and yet they have hated Me, and the Father with Me. Because the Father and I are one Unit only with the Love. But it was written: "You hated me for no reason". But when the Comforter comes, the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you also will witness for Me, because you have been with Me since the beginning.

I am telling you this so that, when the hour comes, you may not be depressed and scandalised. The time is about to come when they will expel you from synagogues, and those who kill you will think that they are doing a holy duty for God. They have not known either the Father or Me. That is their excuse. I have not told you these things so extensively, before this hour, because you were just like new-born babies. But the mother is now leaving you. I am going away. You must become accustomed to other food. I want you to know.

Not one of you has asked Me again: "Where are You going?". Sadness is making you dumb. And yet My going away is a good thing also for you. Otherwise the Comforter will not come. I will send Him to you. And when He has come, through the wisdom and the words, the deeds and the heroism that He will infuse into You, He will convince the world of its deicide sin, and of justice with regard to My holiness. And a clear cut will divide the world into reprobates, enemies of God, and believers. The latter will be more or less holy, according to their will. But judgement will be passed on the prince of the world and his servants. I cannot tell you more, because you are not yet able to understand. But He, the Paraclete, will give you the whole Truth, because He will not speak as from Himself. But He will tell you everything He heard from the Mind of God and will announce the future to you. He will take what comes from Me, that is, what is still of the Father, and will tell you.

There is still a short time to see one another. Then you will no longer see Me. And then a short time later you will see Me.

You are grumbling among yourselves and in your hearts. Listen to a parable. The last one of your Master.

When a woman has conceived and the hour of delivery comes, she is in great distress, because she suffers and groans. But when her little child is born and she presses it to her heart, all her pain comes to an end and her sorrow changes into joy, because a man has come into the world.

The same applies to you. You will weep and the world will laugh at you. But later your sorrow will change into joy. A joy that the world will never know. You are sad now. But when you see Me again, your hearts will be filled with a joy of which no one will ever be able to deprive you. Such a full joy, that it will obliterate every need of yours to ask for anything for your minds, hearts and bodies. You will feed on seeing Me again, and you will forget everything else. And just from that moment you will be able to ask for anything in My name, and it will be given to you by the Father, so that your joy may be greater and greater. Ask, do ask. And you will receive.

The time is coming when I shall be able to speak to you of the Father in plain words. That will happen because you will have been faithful in the trial and everything will have been overcome. So your love will be perfect, as it will have given you strength in the trial. And what you are short of, I will add it for you, taking it from My immense treasure and saying: "Father, as You can see, they have loved Me believing that I came from You". Having descended into the world, now I leave it and I am going to the Father, and I will pray for you. »

« Oh! now You are explaining things clearly. Now we know what You mean and that You know everything and that You give answers without being questioned by anybody. You really come from God! »

« Do you believe now? At the last hour? I have spoken to You for three years! But the Bread that is God and the Wine that is Blood that did not come from man is already working in you, and is giving you the first thrill of deification. You will become gods if you persevere in My love and in My possession. Not as Satan said to Adam and Eve, but as I say to you. It is the true fruit of the tree of Good and of Life. Evil is defeated in him who feeds on it, and Death is dead. He who eats of it will live for ever and will become "god" in the Kingdom of God. You will be gods if you remain in Me. And yet now... although you have this Bread and this Blood in yourselves, as the hour is coming in which you will be scattered, you will go away on your own account and will leave Me all alone... But I am not alone. I have the Father with Me. Father, Father! Do not abandon Me! I have told you everything... To give you peace. My peace. You will still have trouble. But have faith. I have conquered the world. »

Jesus stands up, He opens His arms out crosswise and with His face shining brightly He says the sublime prayer to the Father. John quotes it integrally.

The apostles are shedding tears more or less openly and noisily. As a last thing, they sing a hymn.

Jesus blesses them. He then says to them: « Let us put on our mans now. And let us go. Andrew, tell the owner of the house to leave everything as it is, as I want that. Tomorrow...

you will be pleased see this place again. » Jesus looks at it. He seems to be blessing walls, furniture, everything. He then puts on His mantle and goes out, followed by the disciples. Beside Him there is John on whom He leans.

« Are you not saying goodbye to Your Mother? » Zebedee's son asks Him.

« No. Everything has already been done. Furthermore, make no noise. »

Simon, who has lit a torch at the chandelier, illuminates the wide corridor that leads to the door. Peter opens the main door cautiously and they all go out into the street, and then, working a gadget, they close the door from outside. And they start off.

17th February 1944.

Jesus says:

« In addition to the consideration on the love of a God Who becomes Food for men, four main teachings stand out from the episode of the Supper.

The First: the necessity for all the children of God to obey the Law.

The Law prescribed that a lamb was to be consumed at Passover according to the ritual given to Moses by the Most High, and I, the true Son of the true God, did not consider Myself exempted, because of My divine quality, from the Law. I was on the Earth: Man among men and the Master of men. I had, therefore, to do My duty towards God as and better than anybody else. Divine favours do not dispense from being obedient and from making an effort towards a greater and greater holiness. If you compare the most sublime holiness with divine perfection, you will always find it full of defects, and consequently it is obliged to strive to eliminate them and achieve a degree of perfection as similar as possible to God's.

The second: the power of Mary's prayer.

I was God Who had become Flesh. A Flesh, that being without stain, had the spiritual strength of dominating the flesh. And I do not refuse, on the contrary I implore the help of the Full of Grace, Who in that hour of expiation would have also found Heaven closed over Her head, that is true, but not to the extent that She should not succeed in detaching and angel from it, since She is the Queen of angels, to console Her Son. Oh! Not for Herself, poor Mother! She also has tasted the bitter abandonment by the Father, but by means of that suffering offered for Redemption, She obtained and made it possible for Me to overcome the anguish of the Garden of Olives and to bring the Passion to completion in all its multiform bitterness, each of which aimed at cleansing a form and a means of sin.

The third: self-control and endurance of offences, the sublime charitable attitude towards all offences, as can be possessed only by those who make the Law of Charity the life of their lives, as I had proclaimed. And I had not only proclaimed it, but I had really practised it.

You cannot imagine what it was for Me to have the Traitor at My table, to have to give Myself to him, and humiliate Myself before him, to have to share with him the ritual chalice, and put My lips where he had put his, and make My Mother do the same. Your doctors have discussed and still discuss the rapidity of My end and they say it originated in a heart lesion brought about by the blows of the scourging. Yes, My heart was injured also by those blows. But it had

already been damaged at the Supper. I was heart-broken by the effort of having to endure the Traitor at My side. It was at the Supper that I began to die physically. What followed was only an increase of an already existing agony. What I was able to do, I did it because I was all one with the Love. Also when the God-Love withdrew from Me, I was able to be love, because I had lived of love during my thirty-three years. It is not possible to reach perfection, as is required to forgive and put up with our offender, if one has not acquired the habit of love. I had acquired it, and I was able to forgive and bear that masterpiece of an Offender, which was Judas.

The fourth: the more one is worthy of receiving a Sacrament, the greater is its effect. That is: if one has become worthy of it through persevering good will, that subdues the flesh and makes the spirit sovereign, mastering concupiscences, directing one's being towards virtues, bending it like a bow towards the perfection and above all of Love.

Because, when you love, you are inclined to make the person you love happy. John, who loved Me as nobody else did, and who was pure, received the utmost transformation from the Sacrament. He began as from that moment to be the eagle, that is accustomed to soaring easily in the High Heaven of God and staring at the eternal Sun. But woe to him who receives the Sacrament without being worthy of it, and who, on the contrary, has increased his human unworthiness with mortal sins. Then instead of being the germ preservation and life, it becomes the germ of corruption and death. Death of the spirit and decomposition of the flesh, whereby it "bursts", as Peter says with regard to Judas. It does not shed blood, the vital liquid always beautiful in its purple hue, but its entrails burst out, blackened by lechery, rottenness pouring out of the decomposed body, as out of the carrion of an unclean animal, a disgusting sight for passersby.

The death of the profaner of the Sacrament is always the death of a desperate person who, therefore, does not know the placid passing away peculiar to those who are in grace, or the heroic death of the victim who suffers intensely but looks fixedly at Heaven and feels certain peace in the soul. The death of one in despair is marked dreadful contortions and terror, it is a horrible convulsion of the soul already gripped by the hand of Satan, who chokes it to detach from the body and suffocates it with his nauseating breath. That is the difference between those who pass away after being nourished with love, faith, hope and every other virtue and heavenly doctrine and with the angelical Bread that accompanies them with its fruit better still if with its real presence - in the last journey, and those who pass away, after the life of a brute, with the death of a brute that Grace and the Sacrament cannot comfort. The former is the serene end of a saint, to whom death opens the eternal Kingdom. The latter is the frightful fall of a damned soul, that feels it is falling into eternal death and in a moment knows what it wanted to lose and for which it can no longer find any remedy. Acquisition and joy for the former; despoilment and terror for the latter.

This is what you give yourselves, according to whether you believe and love, or you do not believe and you deride My gift. And it is the lesson of this contemplation. »