

Now, here our Lord asks His hearers how they will judge of what He is saying, when they shall see Him ascend up into Heaven? Will they be still more offended, because it will seem to be still more impossible, that He should give to them His Body and His Blood? Or will they then begin to see that His teaching must be interpreted spiritually and not carnally? For "it is the Spirit that quickeneth. It is the Spirit *i.e.*, who gives life and force to the Mystery of the Bread of life, to the Mystery of the Flesh and Blood of Christ. The Flesh *i.e.*, the Flesh, apart from the Spirit, profiteth nothing. The Flesh, apart from the Spirit, has no power to give life. A mere carnal feeding cannot profit, cannot give life. But the words which I have spoken to you concerning my Flesh and Blood, they are Spirit, they are Life: for if you follow my words, and feed on Me as I have commanded, you will renew your union with Me, you will be filled with my Spirit, you will dwell in Me: yea, you will receive Life, eternal Life." All this and much more is involved in this great chapter, and goes to shew that our Lord teaches here nothing carnal, but rather a true and real spiritual feeding to His own glory, and for the good of men's souls.

And now, on turning to the Institution of this great and holy Mystery, I observe that it was instituted and ordained at the Paschal Feast. In this Feast the Jews were expected to feed upon their sacrificed Lamb, which prefigured the true Lamb—the Lamb of God. And none could continue in covenant with God and receive His help and blessing, except those, who obeyed His Commandment, by sprinkling the blood of their Paschal Lamb upon their lintels and doorposts, and by feeding, when they had offered their Lamb in Sacrifice, upon the offered Victim. It was upon such an occasion as this, and when our blessed Lord, the true Paschal Lamb, was about to offer Himself up, once for all, upon the Altar of His Cross for the sins of the whole world, that He was pleased to ordain this holy Mystery—was pleased, in fact, to arrange that, instead of His followers feeding upon the body of the Paschal Lamb, which had been for ages a vivid type of Himself, the true Lamb, they should feed henceforth upon Bread and Wine, duly set

apart and consecrated—Bread and Wine, of which our Lord Himself said: "This is my Body," "This is my Blood." It was as much as to say, "it has been hitherto necessary that you should feed upon the sacrificed Lamb or perish: now and henceforth it is equally necessary that you should feed upon this Bread and drink of this Cup of the new Covenant, of the new agreement of God with man, and that thus you should feed and be renewed in your union with the true Lamb, sacrificed for you, for the strengthening and refreshing of your souls, so that your sinful bodies should be made clean by His Body and your souls washed through His most precious Blood." And this command we know was understood by those who heard it just in this way, so much so that the Apostles began at once to set apart or consecrate this Bread and Wine at their daily and weekly gatherings, and we read of the three thousand, who were gathered into Christ's Church or Family by Holy Baptism on the ensuing Day of Pentecost, that, having been baptized for the remission of their sins, with, no doubt, the laying on of the Apostles' hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, they all continued steadfastly in the Breaking of the Bread *i. e.* in the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Now all this goes to shew that our blessed Lord ordained here a great Mystery or Sacrament, and that the outward part of this Sacrament is Bread and Wine, while there is also, by virtue of the Consecration, an inward part or thing signified, *i.e.*, "the Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful," *i.e.*, by those who come in a believing spirit and place no bar. Thus the Bread and Wine, after Consecration, while retaining their natural substances, "would seem to be something more than they were before. Or, in other words, it would seem that, by virtue of due Consecration, an unspeakable something arises by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost." But this is something which cannot be defined, as Canon Mason well says, in the language of human schools: for it is Bread and Wine, and yet, without any change of substance, it is consecrated to be after a heavenly manner the precious Body and Blood of Christ, so that we ought to be