

This is my body...

Philip and Bartholomew were waiting by the rainwater cistern. They were the first to see him. He was a stocky little man who had just filled a large water jar. He wrapped both arms around the heavy jar and lifted. As he hurried down the street the round belly of the jar rolled against his own round belly causing occasional slops of water to leap free of the container and splash onto his servant's tunic.

The entire group of Disciples, led by Philip and Bartholomew, followed the man with the jar. As Jesus instructed them, they followed him to a large two-story house and watched him enter it. The Disciples then went to the front door.

Another servant answered, surprised at such a large group outside.

Peter spoke: "Tell your master that the Teacher asks where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my Disciples."

The owner was soon at the door and invited the group inside. He led them down a cool portico, flanked by gardens, past the main part of the house, they came to an outside stairway which ascended to a large room overlooking the gardens and the busy street outside the wall.

The owner smiled and with a sweep of his hand gestured toward two of his servants. "Everything you will need should be here for you. If there is more, these men will provide it."

The Disciples were amazed that everything Jesus had told them was now being fulfilled. With trembling hands they began to prepare what was to be their final supper with Jesus.

When Jesus appeared, all was ready. In each of their hearts a feeling of anxiety and sadness began to rise. John



tried to contain his surging emotions and found himself near tears. Only Judas seemed unmoved. He had other things on his mind.

Jesus then took the bread and broke it. He held it up for all to see and solemnly declared: "This is my body..."



Those words of Jesus have echoed through the Liturgy of the Eucharist for two millennia. They are the familiar words spoken by the celebrant at each Mass. They are words that summon us to the spiritual banquet which leads us into the depths of Jesus' love for us.