

**THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK**

(“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”)

(John 1: 29)

So many of our prayers are drawn right from the words of Sacred Scripture. The greetings and conclusion of Mass are. The words of consecration are. The Our Father of course is. The Hail Mary is. Before the reception of communion at each celebration of the Eucharist all those present in prayer repeat, as a prayer, these words quoted above from the lips of John the Baptist. We refer to Jesus very easily as the Lamb of God. When the priest elevates the host immediately before communion he says “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. He then adds: “Happy (or blessed) are those who are called to his supper.” We are referring to the supper of the lamb.

The original supper of the lamb was the Passover supper at which the lambs slain in Egypt were consumed by the Israelite people whose doorposts were coated with the blood from that lamb. The angel of death respected the blood of those lambs and passed over those households but visited all the households throughout Egypt and devoured the firstborn in each home.

Later the people of Israel passed over the Red Sea under the protection of the Lord God and after their sojourn in the desert wilderness eventually came to the land of Israel, the land of promise and crossed into Israel, passing over again under the protection of God. But those Passovers were preparatory to the definitive Passover where Jesus is slain on Calvary as the Passover lambs are being slaughtered in preparation of the Passover meal. This is the picture presented in the Gospel of John rather than in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. The Supper of the Lamb is the Last Supper, the supper at which Jesus presides and in which he leaves himself to us as bread for our journey. The Supper of the Lamb is the Eucharist celebrated daily throughout the world. At each celebration he is really and truly present, present as he was on Calvary, although here in unbloody fashion. But present. Really present. Real Presence. It is all right there before our eyes of faith. Do we see? That is the question of the week.