



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## *The Real "Last Supper"*

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The organizers of the French Olympic Games kicked over a beehive of controversy with their opening ceremonies. Not content with the run of the mill celebration of sport and international unity, the French treated the world to a bewildering, disgusting display of immorality. But what really moved the needle of outrage was a wretched portrayal of da Vinci's *The Last Supper* which included representatives of the LGBTQ rainbow and a nearly nude blue-skinned portrayal of Dionysus. According to Thomas Jolly, the artistic director of this sordid travesty, "Clearly, there was never an intention to show disrespect towards any religious group or belief ... The idea was to depict a big pagan celebration, linked to the gods of Olympus, and thus the Olympics" (*The Wrap*, 7/28/24).

So, let's get this straight: a sacred Jewish feast, Passover, is transformed into a bacchanalian festival; Jesus is replaced by an obese female "love activist"; the apostles become a company of sexually aberrant misfits; and instead of portraying the selfless and sacrificial death of Christ Jolly glamorizes self-indulgence and hedonistic excess. *And you wonder why a third of the world's population is offended??* And in response you double down and insult Christians further by boasting, "It was my absolute honor to perform in front of billions of people around the world ... and remember, to the ones that had their feathers ruffled seeing queerness on their screen: WE AINT GOING NOWHERE" (drag queen Nicky Doll, *Fox News Online*, 7/29/24).

It is one thing to spew ungodly messaging out of every mass media spout; we are exposed to that all day, every day. But it is another thing altogether to profane something sacred to billions of people as you replace it with your contrarian and blasphemous ideals. But we should not be surprised at such defiance and debauchery, for as Paul wrote to Titus: "To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled" (1:15). Evil is not content with its own existence; it must attack and defile everything to the contrary. Evil cannot tolerate rivals; it seeks to contaminate all purity so that all that is left is a vast cesspool of darkness and misery. This is what was on display in the Olympic opening ceremonies, not the subterfuge offered by Jolly and his apologists in their transparent attempt at damage control.

And make no mistake: it was not da Vinci's *painting* that was being mocked; it was the *event on which it was based*: the last meal of Jesus with His disciples before His crucifixion the next day. What was the significance of that meal and what transpired during its observance?

**The Jewish Passover.** This was the first annual feast of the Jews and was a commemoration of the liberation from Egypt (Ex 12:14-30; 23:14-15; Lev 23:4-8). Several elements converged in this meal: the grace and power of God to free Israel from slavery; the sacrifice of a lamb to secure exemption from the death of the firstborn; the bitter herbs that symbolized the horrible conditions of servitude to the Egyptians. Feasts, celebrations, and memorials are vital elements of cohesion that help preserve cultural unity and identity. It was this feast that God chose to be a precursor of the sacrifice of His Son for the sins of all mankind.

**The Lord's Supper.** During this Passover meal with His disciples (reclined on elbows at a low table on the floor – a scene quite different from that depicted by da Vinci), Jesus gave new meaning to the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is

My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt 26:26-28). It is clear that Jesus is speaking futuristically and symbolically; He would not be put to death until the next day, and that death would inaugurate a new covenant in which His sacrifice would be remembered by His disciples weekly until His return at the day of judgment. As Paul noted: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Cor 11:26; cf. Ac 20:7).

As with so many other elements of Israel’s history, the exodus from Egypt and the Passover (also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread) are types which find their true meaning in the coming of Christ. Prophecies anticipate the coming of Christ both in direct application and also in more veiled symbols. A point missed by both ancient and modern Jews: the rise of Abraham’s descendants was never the be-all and end-all of God’s purpose. Rather, they were to be the special nation created by God “from one man, and him as good as dead” (Heb 11:12), for the express purpose of bringing salvation to the world via Jesus Christ. As Israel was spared from the death of the firstborn by the sacrifice of an innocent lamb, its blood smeared on the entry way of each home, “indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:7-8).

Let it be noted that da Vinci’s painting not only depicts the Passover feast but the announcement of Jesus that “one of you will betray Me” (Jn 13:21). Consternation is evident in the facial expressions and body language of the apostles. A little while later Judas will be excused from the meal in order to make his final arrangements for Jesus’ arrest. Thus he has “kept the feast” with “malice and wickedness,” and so have the Jewish leaders who seem to have delayed eating the Passover in order to plot Jesus’ murder (Jn 18:28). Betrayal lies at the very heart of the Passover, and the Paris Olympic organizers unwittingly played that role to a T.

One wonders why the French Olympic organizers didn’t parody Muhammad or pillory Islam which advocates the violent death of homosexuals. Well, we actually know the answer to that, don’t we? But let’s highlight the difference: Christians are gracious and forgiving. Those who attack it are counting on that goodness lest they face retaliation. Those who shamelessly defile Christianity are cowards and bullies who prey upon the weak. But even blasphemers are offered forgiveness by God if they are willing to repent. The Jesus whom they mock died for them, too. We pray for those who hold nothing sacred, for if they remain in darkness there is “a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries” (Heb 10:27). God will not be mocked with impunity. **08/04/24 - The Centreville Journal**

For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 1 Peter 4:3-5 NKJV