The words from Holy Thursday’s Mass of the Lord’s Supper are fulfilled on the cross. St Paul’s first written account in the New Testament about the Eucharist explains: “This cup is the new covenant in my Blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Cor 11:25). And from the Mass itself, the priest prays:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it,
for this is the chalice of my Blood,
the Blood of the new and eternal covenant,
which will be poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in memory of me.

Covenant is the one-word summary of the Passion of the Christ on Good Friday. Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom. The church, troubled humanity, is his beloved bride whom he is willing to die for. Saint Paul brings this covenant into clearer focus in his Letter to the Ephesians:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (5:25-27).

Not only does Paul help us to understand the crucifixion, he helps every groom to understand the way he is to express his love in the marriage covenant with a self-sacrificial love and a willingness to die for his beloved bride.

The crucifixion is a bloody event, but the image of a wedding helps us to see the purity of Jesus’ intention in offering his Body and Blood on the Cross for our salvation. He lays down his life to free his bride from sin, to cleanse her and purify her and make her holy. For our part of the covenant, Jesus implores us to “do this in remembrance of me.” He invites us to the feast of heaven and earth to eat of his Body and drink of his Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant.

And wouldn’t the wedding be incomplete without a mother-in-law? With the incarnation, Blessed Mary became the Mother of God. With the crucifixion, she becomes the Mother of the Church. Mary is at the foot of the cross with the beloved disciple, John, when Jesus speaks to both of them:

He said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.”
Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.”
And from that hour the disciple took her into his home (John 19: 26-27).

As Mary stands at the foot of the cross and silently takes all of this in, the prophecy of Simeon from the Presentation in the Temple is fulfilled: “And you yourself a sword will pierce (Luke 2:35). Mary, her heart pierced by the passion and death of her son, is the Blessed Mother of the Church.

Let us also recall the words of Jesus who in reference to his mother describes true blessedness as “hearing the word of God and observing it” (Lk 11:27–28 and Lk 8:20–21). Take time on this Good Friday to reflect on the Passion of Christ from chapters 18 and 19 of the Gospel of John, so that you may both hear his word and ponder how to better observe it.