

- studies of Scripture, such as *Reasons for Our Hope* by Sister Rosalind Moss, and studies of our faith, such as *The Mystery of Israel and the Church* by Dr. Lawrence Feingold;



- a variety of subjects, such as: Jewish and Catholic liturgies and music; the Sabbath and the Lord's Day; Jewish and Catholic prayer; Jewish and Catholic mystical literature; various historical events as recorded by Jewish and Catholic writers; the demise of Christendom; the history of anti-semitism and anti-Judaism; the *shoah* (holocaust); the lives of Catholic and Jewish people as they have impacted the destiny of the Jews and of the Church; the lives of Hebrew Catholics; the role of males and females in Judaism and Catholicism; Jewish laws of family purity; Jewish laws of speech; the Hebrew language; the many meanings of the term *Israel*; the *People Israel* as presented in the Catechism and other Church documents; *salvation* as understood in Judaism and Catholicism; and so on.

- The Catholic and Jewish calendars also provide ample topics for study as well as for celebration.

- If the group wishes, it would be appropriate to invite teachers, priests, rabbis, musicians, artists, and others to give lectures or teach on an appropriate subject.

Some General Thoughts

- If the group is large enough, it would probably be helpful to elect a leader and assistant for a specific period of time, or for a particular study, along with a secretary to take notes about the course of each meeting.

- Notes about the meetings can serve the havurah in assessing its own development, learning from the past, and making changes where necessary.

These same notes can be used to provide a synopsis of the meeting(s). The synopsis, in turn, could be included in *The Hebrew Catholic*, enabling each havurah to benefit from the experience of the others. They could also help to inspire other individuals to join or start a havurah.

- Once a havurah is established, the members can begin letting parishes and other Catholic groups in

their area know it exists. Simple notices in parish bulletins, on parish bulletin boards, in organization newsletters, in diocesan newspapers, etc. will spread the word about the AHC and the local havurah.

Such efforts can bring new members into the havurah and will, hopefully, attract some Hebrew Catholics.

- For a variety of reasons, many Hebrew Catholics intentionally keep their Jewish origins hidden. It is important to be sensitive to this if it is known that a Hebrew Catholic is attending a havurah meeting.

- With a well-established havurah, the members can also undertake projects that serve their parishes and communities. The *mitzvot* of Christ, summarized in the commandment to love our neighbor as Christ loves us, can inspire the havurah to find opportunities to take part in the new evangelization called for by the Holy Father and the Church.

- A successful havurah will require that all meetings begin and end at the precise times advertised. *Schmoozing* (*socializing*) can take place prior to or following the meeting.

- When groups grow a little too large, it is time to think about starting a new group. How large a group should be will depend upon many factors, including how many can be comfortably accommodated wherever the group is meeting. As a rule of thumb, groups of 10 people work pretty well, Beyond 10, it becomes increasingly difficult for everyone to participate. It might be best to set a limit that could temporarily accommodate an extra 3-5 people. Then when the last person of that extra has joined, a new group should be started. The time spent with the original group will give the new people valuable experience for the running of their own group.

- Regarding food, some groups will have simple refreshments at the end of the meeting. Others have refreshments at a break in the middle of the meeting. And some have a dinner or pot-luck approximately an hour before the meeting begins. Whatever a group decides, everybody should participate in bringing food, refreshments, and drinks. There should always be some people who help the host clean up, do dishes, etc.

- The AHC havurot is an exciting prospect whose time has come. It ought to be an enriching experience for all involved and should well serve our Lord,

the Church, the AHC, and the Jewish people. But it will not be without its challenges. The members will have ample opportunity to develop the virtues as different ideas, personalities, and experiences come into play.

- Place everything in Miriam's care and pray about everything. Remember that we are pioneers learning about and experiencing our Israelite heritage, a heritage that has long been dormant within the Church.

- One final word from a Hebrew Catholic author: *Ours is the responsibility of restoration through love, in submission to Him ...*

Ours it is to lift up the sacrificial Lamb on the altar and intercede on behalf of Israel.



“The glorious Messiah’s coming is suspended at every moment of history until His recognition by ‘all Israel’...”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, par. 674.

May our efforts hasten the day when ‘all Israel’ shall proclaim

“Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord”

ברוך הבא בשם יהוה
(*Baruch haba b'Shem Adonai*)

For additional information, please contact:

Association of Hebrew Catholics
4120 W Pine Blvd • St. Louis MO 63108

Email: ahc@hebrewcatholic.org

Web: www.hebrewcatholic.org

ASSOCIATION OF HEBREW CATHOLICS

Havurah



WHY AN AHC HAVURAH?

In Hebrew, a **havurah** [plural, havurot] is a small group of individuals, couples, or families who meet on a regular basis for prayer, study, or fellowship. The havurah may be independent or organized within the framework of a larger organization, such as a parish.

Over the last few years, we have suggested that small prayer-study-celebration groups be formed.

Our conviction has grown that the Holy Spirit will use these groups to play an indispensable role in the development of our work. These groups may also provide critical, if not determinative, input to the Holy



See's evaluation and judgment of our eventual petition to preserve the People Israel within the Church.

Our conviction is based upon:

- all that we learned from Fr. Friedman;
- conversations with members of the hierarchy and others;
- our experience with Catholics, both laity and clergy, and especially with Hebrew Catholics.

In *Jewish Identity*, Fr. Friedman wrote:

“It has to be recognized that the time is not ripe for a Hebrew community in the Church, here and now. A great deal of preparatory work is necessary.” (pg. 171)

Certain aspects of our work will have to be addressed by theologians, canon lawyers and bishops. Other important aspects must be addressed by the laity and those with religious vocations who believe in the work of the AHC. And it must be addressed right in our own back yards.

AHC Havurah: a work of hope ...

Thus, we feel impelled to promote the development and growth of havurot. An AHC havurah, formed by as few as two people, would meet on a regular basis for prayer, study, fellowship or celebration of the Hebrew Catholic liturgical year.

for the AHC ...

The AHC havurot will provide a place where people can meet:

- to develop an intimate, orthodox, spirit-filled community committed to mutual support and spiritual growth;
- to pray together for the needs of the AHC, the People Israel, and the Church;
- to study and discuss Fr. Friedman’s ideas, the work of the AHC, the totality of our Jewish heritage and its relationship to our Catholic faith, the Hebrew language, etc.;
- to attract people who will administer, support and continue our work;
- to attract Hebrew Catholics who are scattered among approximately 19,000 parishes in the U.S. and in parishes throughout the world; and
- to begin rekindling the Hebrew Catholic identity, spirituality and culture that has been dormant since approximately the third century.

for the People Israel, for the Church ...

The AHC havurot can help:

- transform the work of the AHC from ideas and conversations into concrete, living realities;
- provide the pastoral support needed for Jews who have entered the Church as well as those who are searching;
- make an important contribution towards en-

abling the People Israel to fulfill their vocation of providing a collective witness to Yeshua;

- enrich the faith and lives of all Catholics as they learn and experience the Jewish roots of our faith;
- support the local parish through havurah programs and the witness and zeal of havurah members;
- and finally, serve as one of our Lord’s instruments in the Church’s preparation for all Israel’s recognition of her Messiah, *“life from the dead”*, and the second coming of our Lord.

and for all peoples.

Once established, the AHC havurot will:

- be amongst those small vital pilgrim communities of the Church that Cardinal Ratzinger hoped will again become the *“salt of the earth”*;
- be an integral part of the *new evangelization*, contributing a vibrant and rich Jewish perspective;
- prepare the ground for the future Israelite community, anticipating the day when God will gather all peoples to Himself.

AHC Havurot: in anticipation

Each havurah will be free to plot its own course in accord with the needs and desires of its members. With this freedom, the havurot will serve as the laboratories where ideas and practices will be worked out through discussion and experience. The only current requirement for a havurah to be affiliated with the AHC is that it be faithful and obedient to the Magisterium.

The havurot will not, however, be left without help. From headquarters, we will be available for consultation, and we will help different havurot connect with each other for mutual encouragement and support. We are developing materials that the havurot can use in their meetings for prayer, study, and celebration. From the feedback and contributions of the havurot, the materials and guidance will grow.



AHC havurot: your involvement

If we are to give flesh to the ideas motivating the work of the AHC, that is, if the work of the AHC is to advance, then we are called to make the commitments that will breathe life and spirit into our work.

We must pray and discern what we can do, what we can give up, what we can rearrange, in order to bring each havurah into existence.

Messianic Jewish congregations are growing as Jews are discovering their Messiah and joining with other believers outside the Catholic Church. We have spoken to many Catholics who attend these congregations. They do so because they wish to learn and experience the roots of their faith, and there has been nothing equivalent within the Catholic Church to date. Yet, our AHC havurot could provide all that Messianic Jewish congregations provide, and moreover, all within the inexhaustible richness of our Catholic Faith.

DEVELOPING AN AHC HAVURAH

In Australia, there has been a havurah since the very beginning of the AHC. Founded by Andrew Sholl, who collaborated with Fr. Friedman in the launching of the AHC, it is still a vibrant group today.

The following thoughts are offered to those who would like to host or develop a havurah but feel somewhat lost as to how to proceed. They are also directed to those who believe that they cannot start a havurah without Hebrew Catholics present. Please don’t feel bound by these suggestions. They are offered simply to stimulate your own thoughts.

First Meeting

Who to invite: Any Catholic who has an interest in Judaism, the Jewish people, the Jewish roots of their Catholic faith, the role of the People Israel in salvation history, the reconciliation of Jew and Christian, and similar topics. It is not necessary to have a Hebrew Catholic involved.

Though associated with the AHC, the havurah is free to pursue the objectives of prayer, study, celebration and fellowship in accord with the wishes of its members.

The number of people who come to the first meeting is not important - even two people are enough.

What is important is to get started. In *Second Exodus*, Marty Barrack reminds us:

“The Talmud said: ‘If two sit together and the words between them are of Torah, then the Shekinah is in their midst.’

Jesus said: ‘For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them.’”

Sample initial agenda

- opening prayers - use standard Catholic prayers;
- introduction of each person;
- brief introduction of the AHC by the host or some other person;
 - invite those present to describe what they are looking for, what they would like to learn, what they would like to experience;
 - discuss the time and place of subsequent meetings; monthly meetings are suggested in the beginning;
 - if time permits, use material from an issue of *The Hebrew Catholic* to stimulate discussion and as a sample of the kinds of topics that can be addressed;
 - intercessory and closing prayers: your group can pray for the Holy Father, the Church, the AHC, the Jewish people, for Israel and all who suffer in the turmoil there, and for each other.
- follow with social time and refreshments.

Subsequent Meetings

In subsequent meetings, the program of your havurah can begin to take shape.

Prayer, of course, should always be part of the havurah meetings. The patrons of the AHC are the Blessed Virgin under her title of *Our Lady of the Miracle*, and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein). It would be wonderful to open the meeting with prayer to our patrons, asking their intercession for the individuals present and for the meeting’s activities. Also, at the close of the meeting. Additional intercessory prayer, as in the sample agenda, is also recommended.

Some ideas for topics of study include:

- books such as: Fr. Friedman’s *Jewish Identity*, Roy Schoeman’s *Salvation is From the Jews* and *Honey From the Rock*, Marty Barrack’s *Second Exodus*, Taylor Marshall’s *The Crucified Rabbi*, and many others;