

A Passover Seder in the Light of Christ

Roy Schoeman

Ed. We have invited Hebrew Catholics who celebrate their heritage within the context of their Catholic faith to send us descriptions of their celebration. We remain open to ecclesiastical authority with regard to the suitability or use by Catholics of the material presented here.

In this issue, we are grateful to Roy Schoeman for his rendition of "A Passover Seder in the Light of Christ."



A Passover Seder in the Light of Christ

INTRODUCTION

Let us begin "in the beginning" – in the book of Genesis, with the story of our father Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac: (Genesis 22):

¹After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." ²He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; and he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. ⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the ass; I and

the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." ⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together. ⁹When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham put forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." ¹²He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called the name of that place The LORD will provide; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." ¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Genesis 22, RSV, except v.18 NKJV)

It was Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac which God reciprocated, two thousand years later, with the sacrifice of His only-begotten son, born also from Abraham's seed, on yet another mount, that of Calvary. And so we see that Abraham's utterance "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (v. 8) was prophetic far beyond anything he knew, referring not only to the provision of the ram "provided" by being caught in the thicket, but referring far more profoundly to the only truly acceptable sacrifice, that of God's Son Himself on the altar of Calvary. So as we celebrate the Exodus of the Jews from their slavery in Egypt, with its central symbol of the Paschal lamb sacrificed that first Passover night and yearly, ever since, on the night of the Seder, let us remember the true Paschal Lamb, sacrificed on Calvary to bring us true freedom, freedom from our sins, freedom to be sons and daughters of God through participation in the sacrifice of His Son the Messiah. For since the dawn of Christianity, Jesus has been seen as the true Paschal lamb. In the words of St. Augustine, (Contra Faustum Manichaeum)

...[what was thus figured in] the feast of the paschal lamb ... has been fulfilled in the sufferings of Christ, the Lamb without spot.... In the gospel we have the true Lamb, not in shadow, but in substance; and instead of prefiguring the death, we commemorate it daily [in the holy sacrifice of the Mass]

Since Apostolic times the release of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt has been seen as a figure of mankind being released from the bondage of sin, and each event in the Passover narrative as a prefiguration of an aspect of our redemption through Christ. For example, let me quote St. Cyril of Jerusalem, one of the post-Nicene Church Fathers, in his "First Lecture On The Mysteries."

Let us now teach you the effect wrought upon you on that evening of your baptism ... When Pharaoh, that most bitter and cruel tyrant, was oppressing the free and high-born people of the Hebrews, God sent Moses to bring them out of the evil bondage of the Egyptians. Then the door posts were anointed with the blood of a lamb, that the destroyer might flee from the houses which had the sign of the blood; and the Hebrew people was marvelously delivered. The enemy, however, after their rescue, pursued after them, and saw the sea wondrously parted for them; nevertheless he went on, following close in their footsteps, and was all at once overwhelmed and engulfed in the Red Sea.

Now turn from the old to the new, from the figure to the reality. There we have Moses sent from God to Egypt; here, Christ, sent forth from His Father into the world: there, that Moses might lead forth an afflicted people out of Egypt; here, that Christ might rescue those who are oppressed in the world under sin: there, the blood of a lamb was the spell against the destroyer; here, the blood of the Lamb without blemish Jesus Christ is made the charm to scare evil spirits: there, the tyrant was pursuing that ancient people even to the sea; and here the daring and shameless spirit, the author of evil, was following thee even to the very streams of salvation. The tyrant of old was drowned in the sea; and this present one disappears in the water of salvation.

The crossing of the Red Sea, passing from slavery to freedom, prefigured our Baptism freeing us from original sin; the Blood of the Lamb on the doorpost turning away the avenging angel and sparing the Jews from death prefigured the Blood of Christ on the Cross turning away God's rightful judgment, sparing us from eternal death; the forty years journey in the wilderness until reaching the "promised Land" and Jerusalem was a "type" of our lifetime here on earth until we reach our eternal home, the "Heavenly Jerusalem"; and the manna with which God miraculously fed the Jews in the desert prefigured the true bread of life, the Eucharist, with which God feeds us with heavenly food during our pilgrimage on earth.

The identification of Passover with the most sacred mysteries of the Church is not dependent just on the writing of the Church Fathers – it is evident in the circumstances of Christ's life, and is made explicit in the New Testament itself. The miracle of the multiplication of the loaves (always seen as representing the Eucharist) and the subsequent "Bread of Life" discourse both, as John is careful to point out, took place at Passover time (John 6):

¹After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ²And a multitude followed him, because they saw the signs which he did on those who were diseased. ³Jesus went up on the mountain, and there sat down with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a multitude was coming to him, Jesus said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough

bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are they among so many?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." ... ¹¹Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign which he had done, they said, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!" ¹⁵Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself...

²⁴So when the people saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. ²⁵When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" ²⁶Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal." ²⁸Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" ²⁹Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform?" ³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³²Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." ³⁴They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always." ³⁵Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. ... ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." ⁵²... "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; ⁵⁴he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever."

Jesus Himself not only made clear the parallel between the Eucharist and the manna in the wilderness, but he did so at Passover time! And, as we all know, the Passion and Death of Jesus itself took place at Passover, and the Last Supper, which was the first Mass, not only took place at Passover but was itself a Passover ritual meal (a Seder). Exodus 12 makes it clear that no Jew can claim membership with the Jewish people if he doesn't

participate in eating the Passover lamb; similarly, one cannot participate fully in the redemption Jesus offers without eating the true Passover lamb; his flesh and blood in the Eucharist. The Old Covenant foreshadowed in symbols the reality of the New Covenant.

The fact that Christ Himself was the true Paschal lamb, sacrificed to take away our sins once and for all, is made clear over and over in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 5 St. Paul writes:

... For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.

And in Hebrews 9 and 10 says:

¹¹But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹²he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ¹⁵Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant. ... ¹⁸Hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood. ... ²²Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins ... ²⁶... [Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ...

And 1 Peter 13:

¹⁸You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Even in the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah in Isaiah 53, the Messiah to come was referred to as the true sacrificial lamb:

³He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; ... ⁵... he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. ... ⁷... like a lamb that is led to the slaughter; and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. ... ⁹And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

And of course John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the "lamb of God" in John 1:

²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

So with that background, let us begin our Passover Seder.

BLESSING OF THE FESTIVAL CANDLES

(*"Lady of the house" lights candles while saying:*)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

Baruch attah adonai, Eloheynu Melech Haoolom,
Asher Kidshanu B_Mitzovootov Vitsuovaonu
L_hadolik Ner Shel Yom Tov.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has made us holy by the Law, and has commanded us to kindle the Festival light.

THE FOUR CUPS (EXPLANATION)

LEADER: As we celebrate the seder, we will drink four cups of wine. These cups stand for the four things God promised to Moses (in Exodus 6:6,7). Each cup has its own name and meaning. First is the Cup of Blessing, from when God says "I will free you from your burdens in Egypt." Second is the Cup of Judgment, from God saying "I will rescue you from slavery by mighty acts of judgment." Third is the Cup of Redemption, from God's promise, "I will save you with my outstretched arm." The fourth cup is the Cup of Praise, where we praise God for saying, "I will make you my own people."

THE FIRST CUP: BLESSING (KIDDUSH)

"I will free you from your burdens in Egypt."

The Church Fathers noted that Egypt in the Old Testament was a figure of sin, and the Jews' slavery there, a picture of one's slavery to sin. Let us drink this first cup in remembrance of God's promise to deliver us from our slavery in Egypt, our slavery to sin.



(Fill the first cup

and say the following blessing:)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech Haoolom
Bohoray Pree Haogawofen.

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

And let us also thank God for our lives:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech Ha-olam,
Shehaheyanu Vekeyamanu Vehigeyanu Lazman Hazeh.

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who Has given us life, sustained us and brought us to this season of rejoicing.

(All drink the first cup.)

THE WASHING OF THE HANDS (URCHATZ)

LEADER: Now, the hands are washed. At the Last Supper, it is here that (John 13):

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "You are not all clean." When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

ALL: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has made us holy by His law, and commanded us about the washing of hands.

(All wash hands)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הַעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְצִוָּנוּ
עַל-נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

*Baruch Attah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haoolam,
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu
al n'teeolas yadayim.*

ALL: We praise you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who hallows our lives with the Law and commands us to wash our hands.

LEADER: And let us say together the verse which used to be said by the Priest at the point in the Mass which echoes this moment of the Seder: (Psalm 25:6)

ALL: Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas et circumdabo altare tuum Domine ut audiam vocem laudis et enarrem universa mirabilia tua

(I wash my hands in innocence, and go about thy altar, O LORD, so that I may give voice to my praise and tell of all thy wondrous deeds.)

DIPPING OF THE PARSLEY (KARPAS)

The parsley greens stand for the branches of hyssop that were used to place the lamb's blood on the door posts and lintels that first Passover night, and for the new life which was given us in our Redemption. Hyssop



was used as a symbol of purification by David in the Psalms: (Ps 51)

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

And it was also on a hyssop branch that Jesus was given His bitter last drink: (John 19:28+)

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst." A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

So it is fitting that the parsley should be dipped in salt water representing tears – tears for the sadness of the bondage in Egypt, tears of repentance for our sin, and tears for the suffering Jesus went through to free us from our sin.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הַעוֹלָם
בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

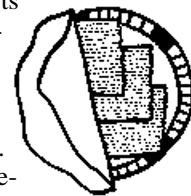
*Baruch Attah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haoolam,
borei p'ri haoadamah.*

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, You create the fruits of the earth.

(All dip the greens in salt water and eat them.)

BREAKING OF THE MIDDLE MATZO AND THE AFIKOMAN

Now comes one of the more mysterious parts of the Seder, and one with particular significance from a Christian viewpoint. Three Matzos are on the table in a special white covering called the "matzo toff", or "Unity". The middle matzo is removed and broken. One half is wrapped and hidden, and later redeemed for a reward. It is called the Afikoman, a Greek word meaning "that which is to come". This tradition has been celebrated for thousands of years. For us it is a beautiful picture. Jesus, the second person of the Holy Trinity, left Heaven and came to earth in two natures, divine and human. In His humanity he was broken for us on the Cross. Like the afikoman, He was wrapped in linen – the shroud – and hidden away in a tomb. On the third day He rose again, and those who find him truly receive a great reward, the greatest known to Man – Eternal Life.



*(Uncover the matzo and lift up the plate for all to see.
Then recite the following:)*

ALL: This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry – let them come and eat. All who are needy – let them come and celebrate the Passover with us. Now we are here; next year may we be in the Promised Land. Now we are slaves; next year may we be free men.

In ancient Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke:

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיָּא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אֲבֹתָנָא
בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם

*Ha lachma anya dee aochaolu aovaohaosaona
b'ara d'mitzrayim.
(Break matzo)*

(The plate is put down, the matzo is covered.)

Although tragically Israel is still waiting, we know that the promise that the hungry shall eat and the slaves shall be free has already been fulfilled. From Luke 4:

And Jesus ... came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

(Now the Afikoman is hidden)

THE FOUR QUESTIONS:

Traditionally, the youngest one present asks:

מָה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?

Mah Nishtanah Halaila Hazeh Meekol Ha-lailoat

YOUNGEST: *Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread; why on this night do we eat only matzo, unleavened bread?*

LEADER: This night is different from all other nights because on this night we celebrate our going forth from slavery into freedom. We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord saved us with a mighty hand. If God had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children, and our grandchildren, too, would still be Pharaoh's slaves.

Why do we eat only matzo? We eat only matzo, unleavened bread, because when Pharaoh finally let the people go they had to flee Egypt quickly. There was no time to let the yeast rise in the dough before they baked it.

YOUNGEST: *On all other nights we eat vegetables and herbs of all kinds; why on this night do we eat only bitter herbs?*

LEADER: Why do we eat bitter herbs? It is to remind us how bitter it was to live as slaves in Egypt.

YOUNGEST: *On all other nights we never think of dipping herbs even once; why on this night do we dip twice?*

LEADER: We dip the parsley in salt water to remind us of our tears, for our slavery, for our bondage to sin, and for the price that Jesus paid for our redemption. We dip the bitter herbs, the horseradish, in the sweet apples (charoseth), to remind us that our ancestors were able to withstand bitter slavery because they never lost the sweet hope of freedom.

YOUNGEST: *On all other nights we eat either sitting up or reclining; why on this night do we all recline?*

LEADER: Why do we eat reclining? Because free men, and not slaves, recline at table. And since our people became free this night, we recline.

(Refill the cups with the second cup but do not drink.)

THE FOUR SONS

LEADER: The Torah speaks of four sons: One is wise, one is wicked, one is simple and one does not even know how to ask. The wise one asks: "What are the testimonies, the statutes and

the laws which the Lord, our God, has commanded you?" You, in turn, shall instruct him in all the laws of Passover, up to "one is not to eat any dessert after the Pesach lamb."

The wicked one, what does he say? "What is this service to you?!" He says "to you," but not to him! By thus separating himself he has excluded himself from participation in the remembrance of the Passover, and hence from its saving act of redemption. You, therefore, are to say to him: "It is because of this that the Lord did for me when I left Egypt"; "for me" but not for him! If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed!

The simpleton says: "What is this?" Thus you shall say to him: "With a strong hand the Lord took us out of Egypt, from the house of slaves."

As for the one who does not know how to ask, you must begin for him, as it is said: "You shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I left Egypt.'"



THE STORY (MAGGID)

LEADER: During a famine in the land of Canaan, the sons of Israel moved to Egypt. They prospered there, and became a great nation. The Pharaoh feared that they might, in time of war, side with the enemy, so to subdue them he made them slaves and afflicted them with cruel labor. But they continued to thrive, just as God had promised. This caused Pharaoh even greater alarm, and he ordered the slaughter of Israel's infant sons. By his command, every male child born to the Hebrews was to be cast into the Nile and drowned. But God raised up a deliverer, a redeemer, the man Moses. And He sent Moses to Pharaoh's court to declare the commandment of the Lord. But Pharaoh would not hearken to the Lord of Hosts. And so, Moses pronounced God's judgment on Pharaoh's house and on Pharaoh's land. Through Moses, plagues were poured out upon the Egyptians, upon their crops, and upon their flocks.

THE TEN PLAGUES

LEADER: God saw our suffering and heard our cries. He brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror, and with signs and wonders. These are the ten plagues which the Most Holy brought upon the Egyptians.

(As each plague is named, each person dips a finger in the glass, and drops a drop of wine onto the plate.)

ALL:

Dam	Blood
Tzfardeyah	Frogs
Kinim	Lice
Arov	Swarms
Dever	Blight
Sh'chin	Boils
Barad	Hail
Arbeh	Locusts
Choshech	Darkness
Makat B'chorot	Slaying of the First-Born.

LEADER: Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He withstood the first nine of the plagues and would not let the Israelites depart. So then God sent the tenth plague upon the land of Egypt: the

death of Egypt's firstborn. "And all the first born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first born of Pharaoh who sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first born of the maid servant who was behind the mill; and all the first born of beasts ... and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment." But to protect the children of Israel, God commanded the head of each Jewish household to sacrifice a spotless lamb, without breaking any of its bones, and to apply its blood to the doorway of our homes, first to the top of the doorway, the lintel, and then to the two side posts. Roast the meat of the lamb and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. And you should eat it quickly like people prepared to leave in a hurry, for this is the Passover of the Lord. I will go through Egypt on that night and kill all the first-born in the land, both man and beast; I will destroy all the gods of Egypt: for I am Yahweh, the one true God. The blood will be a sign on your houses. And the blood shall be for a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plagues shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. You shall keep this day as a feast for all your children's children. You will celebrate Passover forever." (based on Ex. 12)

By the blood of a lamb Israel was spared.

By the blood of the lamb was death made to pass over.

Passover is the night when death passed over the houses of Israel because of the blood of the Passover lamb. A mighty act of redemption, and a beautiful picture of redemption destined to come. For just as no bones of the first Passover lambs were to be broken, so none of the Messiah's bones were broken.

John 19:31+:

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high holy day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." And again another scripture says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

And just as the blood of those first Passover lambs on the crossed wooden beams of the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites homes saved them, so the blood of Jesus on the wood of the cross has saved us.

DAYENU

I - lu ho-tzi ho - tzi - a - nu, ho - tzi a - nu mi - mitz - ra - yim,
 ho - tzi - a - nu mi - mitz - ra - yim da - yei - nu.
 (Chorus) Da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da -
 yei - nu da - yei - nu da - yei - nu. yei - nu da - yei - nu.

DAYENU ("It would have been enough for us")

(All recite together):

- If He had merely rescued us from Egypt, but had not punished the Egyptians DAYENU
- If He had merely punished the Egyptians, but had not destroyed their gods DAYENU
- If He had merely destroyed their gods, but had not slain their first-born DAYENU
- If He had merely slain their first-born, but had not given us their property DAYENU
- If He had merely given us their property, but had not opened the sea for us DAYENU
- If He had merely opened the sea for us, but had not brought us through on dry ground DAYENU
- If He had merely brought us through on dry ground, but had not drowned our oppressors DAYENU
- If He had merely drowned our oppressors, but had not supplied us in the desert for forty years DAYENU
- If He had merely supplied us in the desert for forty years, but had not fed us with manna DAYENU
- If He had merely fed us with manna, but had not given us the Sabbath DAYENU
- If He had merely given us the Sabbath, but had not brought us to Mt. Sinai DAYENU
- If He had merely brought us to Mt. Sinai, but had not given us the Law DAYENU
- If He had merely given us the Law, but had not brought us to the land of Israel DAYENU
- If He had merely brought us to the land of Israel, but had not built us the Temple DAYENU
- It would have been enough for us.

LEADER: How much more, then, should we love God for all that He has done for us. For He did all these things, and more.

As disciples of Jesus, we can add a few more Dayenus. If God had merely come to be with us, but had not died to free us from slavery to sin; if He had merely died to free us from sin, but had not risen again to bring us into the promised land of heaven, Dayenu — it would have been enough for us, but not for Him. And, if God had merely given us Jesus on the Cross, but had not given us His Body and Blood in the Eucharist, that too may have been enough for us. But He did so much more!

THE SECOND CUP: JUDGMENT (MAKKOT)

"I will rescue you from slavery by mighty acts of judgment."

We drink this second cup, the Cup of Judgment, free from the judgments God put upon Egypt.



בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

*Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech Haoolom
 Bohoray Pree Haogawofen.*

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

(All drink the second cup).

THE PRAISES (HALLEL)

*(to be recited
alternately by
the two sides
of the table)*



Psalm 113

Praise the LORD!
Praise, O servants of
the LORD, praise the name of the LORD!

Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time forth and for evermore!

From the rising of the sun to its setting
the name of the LORD is to be praised!

The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens!

Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high,
who looks far down upon the heavens and the earth?

He raises the poor from the dust,
and lifts the needy from the ash heap

To make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people.

He gives the barren woman a home,
making her the joyous mother of children.

ALL: Praise the LORD!

Psalm 114

When Israel went forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a
people of strange language

Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.

The sea looked and fled, Jordan turned back.

The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD

At the presence of the God of Jacob,

Who turns the rock into a pool of water

The flint into a spring of water.

Psalm 117/118

Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!

For great is his steadfast love toward us;
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures for ever
– praise the LORD!

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever!

Let Israel say, “His steadfast love endures for ever.”

Let the house of Aaron say,

“His steadfast love endures for ever.”

The LORD has chastened me sorely,
but he has not given me over to death.

I thank thee that thou hast answered me
and hast become my salvation.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

Blessed be he who comes in the name of the LORD!

Thou art my God, and I will give thanks to thee;
Thou art my God, I will extol thee.

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever!

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good
for His kindness is everlasting;

Give thanks to the God of gods
for His kindness is everlasting;

Give thanks to the Lord of lords
for His kindness is everlasting;

Who alone does great wonders
for His kindness is everlasting;

Who made the heavens with understanding
for His kindness is everlasting;

Who stretched out the earth above the waters
for His kindness is everlasting;

Who made the great lights
for His kindness is everlasting;

The sun, to rule by day
for His kindness is everlasting;

The moon and stars, to rule by night
for His kindness is everlasting;

Who struck Egypt through their first-born
for His kindness is everlasting;

And brought Israel out of their midst
for His kindness is everlasting;

Who split the Red Sea
for His kindness is everlasting;

And led Israel through it
for His kindness is everlasting;

Who led His people through the desert
for His kindness is everlasting;

And gave the land as a heritage to Israel, His servant
for His kindness is everlasting;

ALL: Thank the God of heaven
for His kindness is everlasting.

LEADER: The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Lord, our God; and the spirit of all flesh shall always glorify and exalt Your remembrance, our King. From the beginning to the end of the world You are Almighty God; and other than You we have no King, Redeemer and Savior. To You alone we give thanks. Even if our mouths were filled with song as the sea, and our tongues with joyous singing like the multitudes of its waves, and our lips with praise like the expanse of the sky; and our eyes shining like the sun and the moon, and our hands spread out like the eagles of heaven, and our feet swift like deer we would still be unable to thank You Lord, our God and God of our fathers, and to bless Your Name, for even one of the thousands of millions, and myriads of myriads, of favors, miracles and wonders which You have done for us and for our fathers before us. Lord, our God.

Therefore, the limbs which You have arranged within us, and the spirit and soul which You have breathed into our nostrils, and the tongue which You have placed in our mouth they all shall thank, bless, praise, glorify, exalt, adore, sanctify and proclaim the sovereignty of Your Name, our King. For every mouth shall offer thanks to You, every tongue shall swear by You, every eye shall look to You, every knee shall bend to You, all who

stand erect shall bow down before You, all hearts shall fear You, and every soul shall sing praise to Your Name.

ALL: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy Name.

BLESSING OVER THE UNLEAVENED BREAD (MATZOT)



(The three matzos in the "Unity" are held up.)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ.

LEADER: *Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech Haoolom, Hamotzee Lechem Min Ha-oretz.*

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

(These are almost the same words we hear at Mass as the priest raises the unleavened host.)

(After placing the unity back on the table, the table leader breaks small pieces from the top and middle matzos and distributes them.)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל-אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

Baruch Attah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haoolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al aochilat matzah.

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who made us holy by His law, and commanded us about the eating of unleavened bread. (All eat the matzo.)

THE BITTER HERBS (MAROR)

(The leader breaks the bottom matzo into small pieces and dips his piece into bitter herbs.)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haoolam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al aochilat maror.

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who made us holy by His law, and commanded us to eat bitter herbs.

(All eat the bitter herbs.)

Matzo is eaten with a few shavings from the fresh root.)

LEADER: The bitter herb speaks of the sorrow and persecution of the people under Pharaoh in Egypt. As the horseradish brings tears to the eyes, so also did slavery bring tears to the eyes of the Israelites.

EATING THE BITTER HERBS WITH CHAROSET (KOREKH)

(All take two pieces from the bottom matzo and make a sandwich with charoseth or 'sweet apples' and bitter herbs.)

LEADER: All the seder foods help us to tell the story of Passover. So, too, the sweet apples, or charoseth, is a symbol of the mortar and clay bricks made by the Israelites in Egypt.

(All eat the matzo and charoseth together. It is traditional to put some of the horseradish with the charoseth and make a little matzo 'sandwich.')

This sandwich was eaten with Lamb during temple times in Jerusalem. It is still the custom today to give this morsel with affection to a loved one: (John 13)

Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ... after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out; and it was night.

THE PASSOVER MEAL:

(This is where the actual dinner takes place.)



EATING THE AFIKOMAN (TZAPHUN) AND DRINKING THE THIRD CUP

(The children search for the afikoman. The leader redeems it by giving a coin to the one who finds it. The afikoman is broken into small pieces and distributed to each guest.)

At this point we eat the afikoman and drink the third cup, the "cup of redemption". Let us remember the words of Jesus at the Last Supper: (Luke 22):

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

(The third cup is filled and raised.)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech Haoolom Bohoray Pree Haogawofen.

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. (All drink the third cup.)



ELIJAH'S CUP

(Elijah's cup is filled with wine.

The youngest goes to the door and opens it.)

LEADER: There is one place setting that has not been touched. It is Jewish tradition to keep this place for the prophet Elijah. He was prophesied to appear before the Messiah came. (Malachi 4):

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."

Now the door is opened to see if Elijah will come to bring God's promised savior to the people. Israel still waits for the Messiah. But we know that the Messiah has already come. Jesus is the Savior God promised, not only for Israel, but for the whole world. And we know that Elijah did come before Him, in the person of John the Baptist:

Luke 1:17

"Do not be afraid, Zechariah; for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

Mark 9:

And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things; ... But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."

And in Matthew 11:

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

THE FOURTH CUP: PRAISE (HALLEL)

(Fill the fourth cup.)

LEADER: We come to the fourth and last cup. This cup tells of God's promise to gather a people to Himself. For us as Catholics, we see that God has gathered people of every race and language and land to faith in Christ Jesus. We, the Church around the world, are His people: a new Israel with a new covenant. God has delivered us from slavery to sin by the Cross of Christ. Seeing the Blood of Jesus on the doorposts of our hearts, death will pass over us as well. Israel passed through the Red Sea. Likewise, we have passed through the waters of baptism. Therefore, God will gather us into the promised land of heaven where there is a new and eternal Jerusalem, There we will be living stones in a Temple that can never be destroyed, and we will celebrate forever the 'Wedding Feast of the Lamb'.

(Raise the cup and say the following blessing:)



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בְּוֵרָא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

*Baruch attah Adonai Eloheynu Melech Haoolom
Bohoray Pree Haogawofen.*

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

(All drink the fourth cup.)

CONCLUSION

ALL: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe for the fruit of the vine, for the produce of the field, and for the precious, good and spacious land which You have favored to give as an heritage to our fathers, to eat of its fruit and be filled by its goodness. Have mercy, Lord our God, on Israel Your people, on Jerusalem Your city, on Zion the abode of Your glory, on Your altar and on Your Temple. Rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, speedily in our days, and bring us up into it, and make us rejoice in it, and we will bless You in holiness and purity. Remember us for good on this day of the Festival of Matzot. For You, Lord, are good and do good to all, and we thank You.

O Pure One in heaven above, restore the congregation of Israel in Your love. Bring them to the fullness of the knowledge of our beloved Messiah, your only-begotten Son Jesus, and to the fullness of the Redemption of your Church. Speedily lead Your redeemed people to Zion in Joy.

LEADER: Ended is the Passover Seder according to custom, statute and law. As we are privileged to celebrate the Passover this year, may we be privileged to do so in the years to come.

ALL:

Next Year in Jerusalem!

GLOSSARY

Charoseth: A sweet mixture of chopped apples and wine which symbolizes the mortar used by the Jewish slaves in Egypt.

Hagaddah: The book or booklet with the instructions, prayers and text for the Passover seder. Literally means "recounting", because it is a recounting of the story of the Jews' Exodus from Egypt.

Maror: Bitter herbs (traditionally horseradish root) which symbolizes the bitterness of the slavery of the Jews in Egypt.

Matzo (plural Matzot): Unleavened bread used during Passover, recalling the unleavened bread used by the Jews in their flight from Egypt.

Passover: The Jewish festival commemorating the freeing of the Jews from their slavery in Egypt (the Exodus).

Seder: The ritual festival meal celebrated during Passover (literally means "order" since the meal is highly ordered).