



Walking God's Paths



4. Season of Freedom, Season of Rebirth

INFORMATION SHEET

The Passover Meal

The Passover meal is called a *seder* ("order"). The program of this family-centered ritual meal is presented in a volume called the *Haggadah* (from Exodus 13:8, "And you shall tell [*v'higadeta*] your children on that day..."). Through prayers, songs, and symbolic foods, the story of the freeing of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt is recalled and re-experienced. Some of the symbolic foods are:

unleavened bread	<i>matzah</i>	The "bread of poverty and persecution" recalls the haste with which the Hebrews departed from Egypt. They had no time to add yeast to make bread properly.
green vegetable	<i>karpas</i>	Often parsley or celery, the <i>karpas</i> represents spring, new growth, the green of life, rebirth, and freedom. The dipping of the green vegetable into salt water recalls the tears shed by the oppressed slaves.
bitter herbs	<i>maror</i>	Typically horseradish, the <i>maror</i> calls to mind the bitter lives of all those who are oppressed or enslaved.
apples, nuts, cinnamon, red wine	<i>charoset</i>	The <i>charoset</i> mixture resembles the bricks used by the Hebrew slaves during their forced labor. Its sweetness points ahead to ultimate liberation. Eaten together with <i>maror</i> , the bitterness and sweetness of life are signified.
cup for Elijah	<i>kos Eliyahu</i>	a cup of wine reserved for the prophet whose anticipated arrival would herald the coming of the God's Kingdom.
shankbone	<i>zeroa</i>	recalls the sacrifice of the pesach/paschal lambs in the Temple.
roasted egg	<i>betzah</i>	the scorching of the shell symbolizes the festival sacrifice and recalls the cycle of life from birth to death, to rebirth.

The Courses of the Seder

- The Candle Lighting
 - *Kadesh*: sanctifying the day
Kiddush: the blessing of the wine and the drinking of the first cup of wine
 - *UrChatz*: the first handwashing
 - *Karpas*: dipping of green vegetable into salt water
 - *Yachatz*: breaking of the middle *matzah*
 - *Maggid*: the telling of the Passover story (includes the four questions, the ten plagues, and the second cup of wine)
 - *Rachtzah*: second handwashing before eating *matzah*, and blessing
 - *Motzi*: first blessing over the *matzah*
 - *Matzah*: second blessing over the *matzah*
 - *Maror*: dipping of the *maror* in the *charo-set*
 - *Korech*: Hillel sandwich (eating the *maror*, *charo-set* and *matzah* together)
 - *Shulchan Orech*: the family meal
 - *Tzafun*: dessert (searching for the hidden *matzah*)
 - *Barech*: blessings after eating (includes the blessing after the meal, the third cup of wine, and Elijah's cup)
 - *Hallel*: psalms of praise
 - *Nirtza*: concluding prayers, fourth cup of wine, and songs
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The Easter Triduum

Holy Thursday -The Mass of the Lord's Supper

- Liturgy of the Word
The first reading from Exodus 12 imparts directions for putting blood of the doorposts of Hebrew dwellings in Egypt so that the Lord will pass over them. The second reading from one of Paul's letters recounts Jesus' Last Supper. During the meals he identifies bread and wine as his body and blood and instructs his disciples to "do this in remembrance of me." The reading from John's Gospel describes Jesus at the same meal washing his disciple's feet as a model of the service they are to render to one another.
- Washing of Feet
a ritual recommitment to serve one another.
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
The priest consecrates bread and wine by repeating Jesus' words about his body and blood. The congregation shares in the Lord's Supper.
- Transfer of the Holy Eucharist
Consecrated bread that has not been consumed is removed from the main sanctuary area in solemn procession to a special repository in preparation for the liturgy of Good Friday.

Good Friday - Celebration of the Lord's Passion

- Liturgy of the Word
The first reading is the longest of the suffering servant songs in Isaiah. In the second reading, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews portrays Christ as the great high priest whose sacrifice brings salvation. The gospel reading is the passion narrative of the Gospel of John.
- General Intercessions
A series of special invocations to God is prayed, including "for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, that they may continue to grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant."
- Veneration of the Cross
A cross is placed in the sanctuary area, members of the congregation approach it individually and genuflect, bow, or in some way reverence the sign of Christ's sacrifice.
- Holy Communion
The Eucharist is not consecrated on Good Friday, but the congregation shares the communion that was stored in the special repository at the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

The Easter Vigil Service

- Service of Light
A large fire is prepared outside the church. From it the Easter or Paschal Candle is lit, symbolizing the new life of the Risen Christ. The entire congregation lights small individual candles from the Easter Candle as a sign of the life of Christ they had received in baptism.
 - Liturgy of the Word
The story of salvation is told in as many as nine readings. Readings from Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, Baruch, Ezekiel, and Romans may be proclaimed. The gospel reading relates the discovery of Jesus' empty tomb and the first news of his resurrection.
 - Rite of Baptism
Persons being initiated into the church community come forth and receive the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. The entire congregation welcomes them and joins in renewing their own baptismal promises.
 - Liturgy of the Eucharist
The whole community, and most especially the newly baptized, partake of the body and blood of Christ in communion, rejoicing in the new life they share.
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