

Kinning Park Parish Church – Ibrox Parish Church – St Leo the Great Parish

Ecumenical Passover 27th March 2012



Despite the beauty of the glorious sunshine on the Tuesday evening before Holy Week, there was a very full attendance in St Leo's Hall as three local churches met for their annual Ecumenical Christian Passover. This initiative, promoted in the Archdiocese for more than 30 years, has given churches a form of service which enables them to look back together at their roots in the worship of the people of Israel. Our service this year was originally taken from Kevin Mayhew's publication *Focus on Holy Week* but it has been adapted this way and that ever since.



The hall was laid out with 5 tables set with the usual cutlery and plates, plus flowers, dishes of water, bitter herbs, matzos and wine glasses and with many-branched candlesticks..

We began by singing the Benedictus (the Iona version to the haunting tune 'Resignation') and then the Mother for that evening (Catherine Currie) lit the candles and we all stood and said:

'Blessed be the Lord our God, King of the Universe,
who has called us into the Way of Life by sending Jesus the Messiah,
He who is the Light of Life.

May the brightness and warmth of these Passover candles
bring joy and hope to us all.

We thank you Lord God for keeping us alive
and free to celebrate this great festival. Amen.'

The Leader for the evening was David Reid and he led us through the next part which included: 'As we are reminded of the reason for Passover

may we learn to appreciate more deeply the freedom we enjoy. We also renew our concern for those who are not yet free. May we join in working together for the day when people everywhere will be free from oppression, hunger, poverty and war.'

Glasses were filled, and all stood to sing for the first of several times:

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major, 7/8 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are: 'Bless - ed be God! Bless - ed be God! Bless - ed be God for ev - er. A - men.' The second staff starts with a measure rest marked '5' and then continues the same melody and lyrics.

The service continued then with the washing of hands, the dipping of the celery in salt water and eating it, the breaking and sharing of the matzos 'Now we are here; soon we may sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. Now we are still enslaved; soon may freedom come to all'.

The questions were asked by members of the three churches: '

Why is this night different from other nights?'

'Why are we supposed to eat especially bitter herbs?'

'Why are we asked to dip the green vegetables into salt water, and the bitter herbs into charoset?'

'Why did Jesus and his disciples drink wine at the table during the Passover?'

To each question the 'father' for the evening (John Murphy) gave the ritual response.

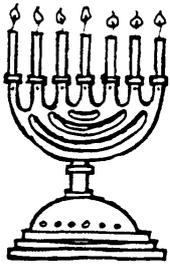
The story of the Exodus was read and the Canticle of Moses was sung:

The image shows a single staff of musical notation in G major, 4/4 time. The melody is a simple, rhythmic line. The lyrics are: 'I will sing to the Lord, glo-rious his tri-umph! I will sing_ to the Lord.' The staff ends with a double bar line.

'I will sing to the Lord, glorious his triumph! Horse and rider he has thrown

into the sea. The Lord is my strength, my song, my salvation.
This is my God, and I extol him! My father's God and I give him praise.

PASSOVER SYMBOLS



The symbols of our feast were explained:

The Paschal lamb is symbolised by the shank bone, the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover for he passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt. So, may he always shield the afflicted and remove any trace of bondage from among the children of men.

Unleavened bread was the hasty baking our fathers made for the journey. The bread that they baked unleavened in haste became a symbol of the Lord's help.

The maror and chazeret are the bitter herbs we eat to recall that the lives of our ancestors were embittered by bondage and oppression. As we eat in festivity tonight we rejoice in the heroic spirit which trials developed in our people, who instead of becoming bitter themselves were sustained and strengthened.

We dip the celery into the sweet paste to symbolise the effect of God's kindness.

The beitzah (hard boiled egg) is a reminder of the festival sacrifice of biblical times and as a reminder of the destruction of the Temple.

Then verses from psalm 115 were sung: 'How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me? The cup of salvation I shall raise In will call on his name.....'

The service continued with the prayer of blessing: 'Blessed be the Lord, the King of the universe, who has redeemed us and our ancestors from slavery, and enables us to renew our past. The matzos were eaten and the wine or juice drunk and then the Passover meal was eaten.



The buffet

After the meal the 'Mother' distributed the Matzos and the cups were filled again. Another psalm was recited, and the lovely hymn 'O Sacred Head' was sung. Rev Elizabeth Spence, the Minister of Ibrox Parish Church, led us in the prayer and blessing taken from the 'Didache' (2nd century text) :

'As this bread was scattered over the hills and then brought together and made one, so let your Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.'

For yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.

David the Leader called out: Blessed is the one who is, who was, and is coming! And we answered in the words taken from the end of the Book of the Apocalypse:
Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

The Taize chant 'Jesus, remember me' was sung, the Lord's Prayer was recited together, and then Rev Margaret Johnstone, the Minister of Kinning Park Parish Church gave us the 'Blessing of Aaron':

The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord look on you with kindness, and give you his peace.

Mgr Gerry Fitzpatrick, the parish priest of St Leo's, thanked the Mother, the Father, and the Leader for their smooth guiding of the celebration, and then everyone for their presence and participation. A particularly warm thanks was given to Marie Rogers and Grace Buckley of the parish's Mossspark Prayergroup who organized the celebration and to those who supported them in the preparations, setting out the hall, cooking and baking, including Jacqueline Barrett, the St Leo's organist, and the members of the parish choir who led us in our singing - especially in The Canticle of Moses which resounded through the hall!



Some of the participants at the annual ecumenical Passover 2012



The final preparations



the washing up