

Learning from Passover without co-opting it (Exodus 12:1-14)

How can these values be lived out in our traditions and in our assemblies?

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April 11, 2022

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The Gospel texts for Holy Week and Easter, Maundy Thursday included, form a natural narrative continuity. That both preachers and listeners would focus on the pilgrimage through the final earthly days of Jesus of Nazareth makes a great deal of sense.

The epistle assigned for the day is straightforward enough, recounting Jesus' last supper and its institution of the meal's central role in the emerging Christian communities. This is a natural fit for Maundy Thursday.

However, the selection of the Exodus text is natural, too, even if it perhaps gets less attention. Jesus' meal's connection to the Passover is explicit in John's Gospel in both tone and proximity. While Christian assemblies should not co-opt Passover or its observance as our own, as Christians we can be inspired by the instructions here laid out and ask: How can these values be lived out in our traditions and in our assemblies?

- How can Christian assemblies center our festivals not only in our churches but in the homes of individuals and families? This is perhaps more important than ever as Christian practice has necessarily moved, at least at times and for some events, into smaller gatherings.

- How can Christian assemblies connect single people, those who are widowed, and those who live alone by circumstance or choice with others to meaningfully observe our holy days? Building these connections helps build and sustain faith.
- While many Christian traditions center sacraments or ordinances in the gathered assembly, how can we equip households to experience holiness and Christ's presence in their everyday meals and their holiday meals?
- How can Christian households and families meaningfully bless their homes and their gatherings as places where Christ is present? Home rituals can be powerful reminders that Christ is with us everywhere, not only when we can gather as a larger assembly.
- How do we practice our faith around the choices we make regarding food? Christian communities can empower people to make just food choices when they are able, and to share food with others experiencing insecurity. These acts are holy.
- How can we make our churches, gathering places, and homes places of genuine safety for others to enter into spiritual practice? Creating spiritually and physically safe spaces isn't only a matter of mitigating risk for ourselves but an expression of God's love for all people, and especially those who have experienced harm or insecurity in the past.

The Exodus text for this day invites us into these reflections and more.