



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

Note on holding a Passover ‘Seder’

It sometimes happens that, in the lead-up to Holy Week and Easter, Christian communities ‘re-enact’ a Passover meal (‘Seder’) for educational or devotional purposes.

In the light of the Catholic Church’s efforts towards reconciliation and friendship with Jews, parish are asked to note that celebrating a Passover ‘Seder’ in a Christian context is inappropriate.

The Passover ‘Seder’ is a Jewish celebration. In this meal, Jews remember and celebrate the Exodus from Egypt. The ‘Seder’ as celebrated by Jews today developed *after* the time of Jesus.

The Eucharist was instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper with his disciples on the Thursday night before he died. The exact relationship between the Last Supper and the Passover meal is a matter of debate, as it is unclear even in the Gospels themselves.

As a general rule, and as a matter of respect, Catholics should avoid any action that might give the impression of appropriating or redefining the meaning of ceremonies and rituals which belong to other religions.

The Passover meal can be studied within the broader context of a study of Judaism. If a group does enact a model ‘Seder’ for educational purposes this must be led by a Jewish person and have the approval of a local Rabbi.

Catholics wishing to experience an authentic ‘Seder’ are encouraged to attend a Passover meal when invited to do so by Jewish friends.



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