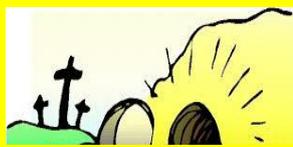




*Ki mit Zion tetzeh Torah Ud'var Adonai mi Yerushalaim*

**WARM  
WISHES  
FOR  
A  
BLESSED  
EASTER  
TO EACH  
ONE**

*Maureena*



**FROM ENGLAND:**

Gill's house in Weston-super-Mare was the venue for an Erev Shabbat Supper celebration with Diane Beckett and Noelle Lomanto, both Bat Kol Alumna Psalms 2014. It was a joy also to welcome Noelle's husband, Salve, and their 10 year old daughter, Ella, for their first experience of this Jewish feast. They are now planning to invite more friends in England to share in Shabbat Suppers.



Left to right: Noelle, Ella, Salve and Diane



Bread is blessed and broken by Gill



Sharing joyful recollections of Psalms 2014



Ella reads the Torah portion

**FROM THE PHILIPPINES:**

**HELEN R. GRAHAM, M.M., PhD.** Bat Kol Alumna 2002, 2005, 2006, 2009, Adjunct Professor, wrote short Holy Week commentaries for the *Living With Christ* daily liturgy booklet that comes out each month and has kindly agreed for us to include these here:

**PASSION/PALM SUNDAY:** *Luke 19:28-40 Blessing of/Procession with palms Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 22; Luke 22:14-23:52;* This Sunday begins the week Christians call "Holy." It is the culmination of Jesus' ministry of preaching, teaching and healing that leads him ultimately to his passion and death. The phrase from the first reading, "... I have set my face like flint" (Isa 50:7c) is echoed in the Gospel of Luke at the beginning of Jesus journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, the place of his death: "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51). In the passage immediately following today's reading at the blessing of palms, we read that "As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!'" (Lk 19:41-42).

In the Lukan Passion Narrative, which is read this Sunday (in Cycle C), two criminals are executed with Jesus, one of which continues to mock Jesus, while the other rebukes him, saying "we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong" (v 41-42). Thus he provides a theological comment on Jesus' innocence, which is given further confirmation by the centurion: "Certainly this man was innocent." Finally both of the men were promised "today you will be with me in Paradise" (v 44).

**HOLY THURSDAY:** *Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18; 1 Cor 11:23-26; John 13:1-15* The restoration of Holy Week by Pius XII (1956) and the liturgical reforms of Vatican II have restored to prominence the Easter Vigil and the Triduum, which begins this evening. Rich themes dominate the liturgy of Holy Thursday evening. All of the readings focus on a sacred meal: Pesach, Eucharist, and the Last Supper. Meals are very significant in most cultures, and meals involve a diversity of food preparations expressive of cultural diversity.

It is in the context of a meal that the identity-story of Israel, the story of the Exodus, is rehearsed and passed on from one generation to the next through the reading of the Haggadah. Our first reading provides the ritual background for this meal focusing particularly on the Passover lamb. The reading from Paul speaks of handing on to the community that which he received, i.e., the Eucharistic ritual which in its origins was also a meal, either a Passover

Meal (as in the Synoptic tradition) or a meal which took place the day before Passover as the lambs were being sacrificed (the Johannine tradition), and which took on Passover significance in the early community.

The Gospel portion provides the atmosphere of Jesus' final meal with his disciples during which most profound symbolic action and conversation takes place. A careful and close reading of the exchange between Jesus and Peter, demonstrates that something extremely solemn and symbolic is operating here. Jesus says to Peter: "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

#### **GOOD FRIDAY:**

The past months have shown us so much violence and dislocation that we are constrained to bring it to our Good Friday commemoration as we also remember the violent death suffered by Jesus. Perhaps one of the most poignant commentaries on our liturgy comes from the final testament letter of the French Trappist Christian de Chereg, written in late 1995, as he approached his own impending death on the heels of the murder of his trappist brothers in Algeria. "If the day comes, and it could be today, that I am a victim of the terrorism that seems to be engulfing all. . . . The Lord of all life was not a stranger to this savage kind of departure. . . . pray for me, [I am] wondering how I found myself worthy of such a sacrifice. . . . And to you, too, my friend of the last moment, who will not know what you are doing. Yes, for you, too, I wish this thank-you, this 'A-Dieu,' whose image is in you also, that we may meet in heaven, like happy thieves, if it pleases our God, our common Father. Amen' Insha Allah!"

We conclude with a poem by the Jewish artist, Marc Chagall, whose artistic representation of the White Crucifixion, seen on the right, offers us a profound reflection on our Good Friday liturgy:

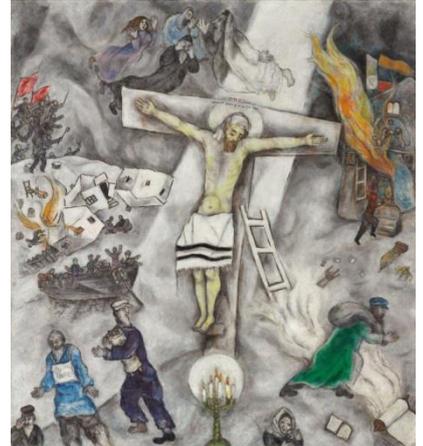
*I carry my cross every day  
I am led by the hand and driven on,  
Night darkens around me,  
Have you abandoned me, my God? Why?*

#### **HOLY SATURDAY:**

We begin with the Service of Light. A blazing fire is prepared and those that gather around experience the flames dispelling the darkness as the Easter candle is lit. We move in procession from darkness to light as the Exultet is chanted in the presence of the new fire of the Easter candle. The readings for the restored Easter Vigil---a veritable feast of readings---take us on a spiritual journey through the story of salvation from the creation story when God called light from darkness, to the story of the Binding of Isaac which is a test of Abraham's faith, to the story of Moses leading the people of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt to freedom, to the restoration from exile in Babylon, and finally, in the Gospel of the Easter Vigil, we meet the women on their way to the burial tomb of Jesus. Upon their arrival they find the tomb empty because, as the angel announces to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 24:7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." (Luke 24:5-7).

**EASTER SUNDAY:** *Acts 10:34, 37-43; Palm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23; Col 3:1-4 (A) 1 Cor 5:6b-8 (B); John 20:1-9*  
Having concluded our commemoration of the paschal mystery with last night's Gospel proclamation, today begins with the first of a series of liturgical celebrations leading to Pentecost. The Easter season readings invite us to meditate on the post-Easter revelations of the risen Lord. In particular, today's Gospel selection combines two different traditions, first that of the early and well-attested story of the Easter morning visit of Mary of Magdala to the tomb, which she found empty. And second, the later and less-attested tradition of Peter's visit to the tomb accompanied by the "other disciple." It is this secondary tradition that is honored as the Easter Sunday Gospel reading. The visit of Mary of Magdala, first disciple to announce the good news of the Resurrection, must wait until the Easter Tuesday liturgy.

The presence of "the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself" (Jn 20:6-7) was testimony that Jesus had indeed left death behind. The other disciple that was with Peter and who reached the tomb first, and went in, "saw and believed" (Jn 20:8). A week later, when the disciples were gathered in the Upper Room, the risen Lord will say to Thomas, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." (Jn 20:29)



## FROM SOUTH AFRICA:

**MARIE ANDRE MITCHELL** SND de N. BA, B.Th. MA Religious Studies, BK alum sends news as follows:

The South African Bishops' Conference has a Department for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue which also includes Relations with Judaism and African Independent Religions, a huge task so the members of the department have different portfolios. I have the Portfolio of Relations with the Jewish Community. Already on the Agenda for the meeting was a report of the lecture that I had organized to celebrate the Jubilee of Nostra Aetate. This gave me the opportunity to inform the members about the Bat Kol Institute and the summer program on the Book of Genesis. I handed out the flyer that Sr Maureena has produced. We now have three Bishops in our department more than any other. One of the Bishops who supported Fr Peter Cullen to attend two Bat Kol programs (2011/12) showed great interest in attending the program. He already knew about Bat Kol and that Fr Peter still runs a weekly session in his parish using the Light of Torah and writes commentaries for the parashat hashavuah when asked to do so. At present our currency, the Rand, is very low against the US dollar so it does make overseas travel very expensive. With the summer program in Jerusalem beginning once again with the Book of Genesis it is a wonderful opportunity to get new people involved with the Bat Kol Institute. Those of us who are alumni know how much we have benefitted from participating in such a unique program - "Christians studying the Bible within its Jewish milieu, using Jewish sources."

## FROM INDIA:

**SR. DR. JOAN CHUNKAPURA**, MMS, Director, Bat Kol Cell, Kerala, sends the following report:

We are glad to share the good news of two Sabbath celebrations done during the months of February and March in two places at Kerala, India. One was at Carmelagiri CMI Public School, Korendakad, Mattupetty, Munnar with Fr. Chacko K.C. There were 15 persons for the Sabbath celebration. On 5th March we had a celebration at Fr. Paul Maileckachalil's Parish (St. Mary's Church, Neriamangalam, Idukki). There were 25 participants to break the Word of God and to share their inspirations with each other. It was ended with the lighting of the candles and sharing Sabbath meal and we sang YHVH. Munnar is 200 kilometers away from Kottayam and Neriamangalam is 100 kilometers from Kottayam

These celebrations brought us together as Bat Kol Alumni. It was all possible because of the visit of Prof. Maureena rejuvenating our spirit in the study of Torah and we got motivated to pass on the light of Torah to others.

It was helpful to expound the Word as one of the passages was written by Sr. Joan Chunkapura who facilitated the group at Fr. Chacko's place and the second one was on women. Being 8th March as International Day for Women, they were very happy to accept leadership of women, sacredness of their body and their role in the scripture which were highlighted in the Parasha of the week.



Fr Paul and participants at St Mary's Church, Neriamangalam, Idukki.



Fr Chacko K.C. and the group at Carmelagiri CMI Public School, Korendakad, Mattupetty, Munnar.



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**FROM JERUSALEM:**

**THANKS AND A SPECIAL REQUEST FROM GILL:**

First, many thanks to all of you who have accepted to write weekly commentaries which are sent out to 700+ alumni and other supporters as well as posted on the Bat Kol website. These are prayerfully crafted, representing hours of work, and are greatly appreciated as a real blessing.

My request is for more writers please for the Sunday Reading commentaries. There are still several Sundays not yet covered:

**April 10, October 02, 09, 16; November 06, 13; December 04**

Please let me know if you can accept to fill any of these gaps. Contact me at [gill@batkol.info](mailto:gill@batkol.info) and I will send you the readings, the format and full instructions.

The Bat Kol mailing list continues to grow but we have much greater capacity to add more addresses. If your family, friends, congregations, colleagues, students would like to receive these weekly commentaries, as well as News Bulletins and other messages, they can add email addresses by going to the website [www.batkol.info](http://www.batkol.info) and clicking on 'Subscribe' near the top of the Home page, or they can [click here](#).



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