

# Celebrating with Symbols

## Scripture Reading

**O**n the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”

Mark 14:12–15

## For Discussion

- What are the symbolic actions in this passage?

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- What do they reveal?

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- How do they reveal?

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## Documentation

(From *Celebrating the Mass*)

### Symbols in the Liturgy

108. Materials and objects used in the Eucharist are to be “truly worthy and beautiful,” authentic in their noble simplicity, and well adapted to sacred use. The greatest care and sensitivity are necessary, even in the smallest matters, to achieve “a noble simplicity and elegance.”

### Bread and Wine

109. The very nature of sacramental symbolism demands that the elements for the Eucharist be recognisable, in themselves and without explanation, as food and drink.

- Bread must be recently baked, made only from wheat flour, and should have the appearance of food. In colour, taste, texture, and smell it should be identifiable as bread by those who are to share it.
- It is therefore expedient that the eucharistic bread,

### Suggested methodology

#### A. Scripture Reading (c. 30 min.)

- One person reads the Scripture reading
- Period of silent reflection
- Second reading of passage
- After a pause for reflection discussion on the questions given

#### B. Documentation (c. 30 min.)

- One person reads the text
- Period of silent reflection
- Followed by discussion on the questions given

*You may find it helpful to write down your own reflections in the space provided.*



even though unleavened and baked in the traditional shape, be made in such a way that the priest at Mass with a congregation is able in practice to break it into parts for distribution to at least some of the faithful. Small hosts are, however, in no way ruled out when the number of those receiving Holy Communion or other pastoral needs require it. The action of the fraction or breaking of bread, which gave its name to the Eucharist in apostolic times, will bring out more clearly the force and importance of the sign of unity of all in the one bread, and of the sign of charity by the fact that the one bread is distributed among the brothers and sisters.

- Wine should be natural and pure, from the fruit of the grape, and free from any foreign substance. To be seen and recognised for what it is and what it signifies, it can help greatly if the wine is brought to the altar in clear glass containers and is of a sufficiently rich colour to be clearly distinguishable from water.
- Care should be taken to ensure that the bread and the wine for the Eucharist are kept fresh; that the wine does not sour or the bread spoil or become too hard to be broken easily.
- In parishes where there is a ministry of baking the Eucharistic bread for the community, care should be taken to observe the canonical requirement that plain wheat flour and water only should be used. (Recipes for baking bread for the Eucharist are available on the Liturgy Office website.) Where there are vineyards within the parish, deanery or diocesan boundaries, “fruit of the vine and work of human hands” can take on an enhanced meaning when the wine used has been produced in the locality.

### Eucharistic Vessels

111. The fundamental eucharistic symbolism of the many sharing in the one bread and one cup is more clearly expressed when all the bread is contained in a single vessel and all the wine in one chalice. However additional vessels will need to be provided in most circumstances.

- Vessels for the Body of Christ preferably have the form of plates or shallow bowls rather than of chalices or reliquaries.
- Chalices for the blood of Christ should be large enough for the quantity of wine needed from the assembly to drink. The vessels should be designed to be easily handled between minister and communicant, and easily tilted by the communicant for the purpose of drinking.

### For Discussion

- What experiences of symbolic action have spoken most clearly to you?

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- What are the challenges with regard to the use of symbols in the liturgy?

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