

**Association of Hebrew Catholics**

New Zealand Branch

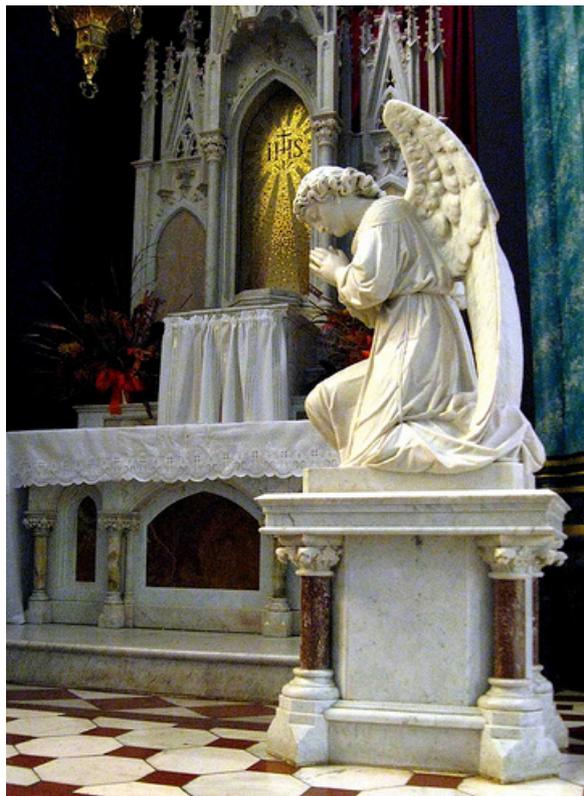
**Hebrew Catholic Presence**

**In the Church**



**"Kaporeth"**

Atonement Place — Exodus 25: 17—22



**Side Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament  
St. Francis Xavier Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.**

# Hebrew Catholic Presence

## In The Church

### 1. Our Invitation To You

- 1.1. We, the Jewish and Gentile members of the Association of Hebrew Catholics invite you to help us restore within the Church a Jewish cultural presence analogous to that which flourished for the first few centuries of the early Church.
- 1.2. In talking of a "Jewish cultural presence" we mean that we are talking not just about somehow providing for Jews who become members of the Catholic Church and discreetly helping them adjust to Catholic culture. That is clearly a very important function. But we are also talking about one of the most exciting movements of the Holy Spirit which since the second half of the twentieth Century has been gently unfolding in the Church throughout the world. It is a movement in which **both Jewish and Catholic** members of the Church grow together in the fulfillment of their God-given vocation.
- 1.3. We invite members of the Church, and whether of Jewish or Gentile origins and background, to join with us and be an **integral part of** a new flourishing, unique Hebrew Catholic culture. We stress the importance of both Jewish and Gentile membership, as our movement is not just a gathering of "former Jews" or some kind of "withdrawal group" or exclusive set! We are determined that all members of the Church will feel welcome and at home either joining us as members, or attending our programmes, celebrations and special events. In other words, we want always to be part of the local diocese and its mission.
- 1.4. Having extended a sincere invitation to you to participate with us as a full and integral member in this emerging apostolate, we feel we should honestly state that **we need your help**. This booklet seeks to share our vision and how it is unfolding. It also attempts to offer some provisional guidelines as a framework for future growth. We hope you will "catch" our vision and help it take shape, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



## 2. A Unique Partnership

- 2.1 We emphasise a very important feature of this holy apostolate — it is for Jews **and** Gentiles in a partnership of equality, each with their own distinct heritage. For Jews it offers love and support as they live out their God-given vocation in fulfillment within the Holy Catholic Faith. For Gentiles it presents the opportunity to be fully engaged as a partner in the restoration of a vibrant Hebrew Catholic cultural stream in the Church, helping members reconnect with the Jewish roots of our Christian Faith.
- 2.2 From this partnership in the Faith there will flow a contribution to the life of the Church in the contemporary world in whatever way the Holy Spirit inspires and gives shape. Our experience to date had been that in promotion of the Hebrew Catholic culture — at least in the case of those directly associated — there has been enormous growth in confidence **to be a Christian** in our fast-changing world. In these cases this has been accompanied by increased interest arising from **re-connection** with the Judaic roots of the Church and Faith: together with more committed zeal to spread the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16: 15), in the way Our Lord intended.
- 2.3 We believe that this confidence, excitement and enthusiasm to share the Faith are gifts of the Holy Spirit, crafted for our times. Our age is one of disbelief, anti-Christian aggression and spiritual barrenness, now so firmly rooted in our Western societies.
- 2.4 It is with these thoughts in mind that we call our on our fellow Church members to **share** their faith and spiritual enrichment as part of the Church's mission in our world. This is even more appropriate given the commitment of the Holy See to mobilise the whole Church to "**Proclaim the Gospel to every Creature**" in the spirit of the New Evangelisation.
- 2.5 As Hebrew Catholics, we are very grateful for the support and encouragement of the Holy See. We are also grateful for the huge efforts of our early members who have, effectively given their lives towards the establishment of this wonderful movement and apostolate in the Church. We encourage you to find out more about our history and background by taking a look at the foundation of the Association of Hebrew Catholics, and related information. This is outlined briefly in the Appendix: [Association of Hebrew Catholics](#).



### 3. More Than An Invitation

- 3.1. In truth, we are more than just "inviting" you. We are **asking you to recall the blessings and empowerment** of your:—
- **Baptism** into the Lord Jesus Christ;
  - **Confirmation** in the Holy Spirit, and as appropriate;
  - **Bar or Bat Mitzvah** — binding to the Most Holy Will of God, the Torah.

In that frame of mind, we can build an understanding of our particular vocation and purpose together in the Church.

- 3.2. We are increasingly conscious of a deep-seated urge nurtured within the souls of Hebrew Catholics from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds to **rediscover together**, an authentic, harmonious inter-relationship of Hebrew and Catholic elements which converge in **vibrant spirituality and worship**. Experience is showing that such worship can be creative, yet traditional: interfacing with our contemporary world yet grounded in the rich heritage of both cultures.
- 3.3. We would like to note here, very briefly, that by "inter-relationship" we do not mean any sort of syncretic (syncretistic) blending. All of Judaism (to use Our Lord's words: "Every jot and tittle" every part of every letter of Torah) was fulfilled by Our Lord Jeshua HaMashiach — Our Lord Jesus Christ in His Death and "Resurrection". When we bring Jewish and Catholic prayers, elements, articles and customs together, we do so in this wonderful spirit of fulfillment and transformation in the Light of Christ.
- 3.4. We believe our vocation is timely, appropriate, urgent and at least for us, a high priority. We invite you to make it yours as well. Whilst Jews entering the Church need to be **nurtured and cared for**, many Gentile members at the same time are earnestly seeking to be **re-connected** with the Church's Jewish roots, and be **better equipped to witness** before an increasingly anti-theistic and hostile society.
- 3.5. This booklet brings to you the opportunity to model your spiritual life, private daily prayer, and communal worship, according to Hebrew Catholic patterns and practices, insofar as you judge them to be appropriate for you. If you are not a member of the Catholic Church, we invite you, nevertheless, to participate in the spiritual exercises of the Hebrew Catholic community where you will always be warmly welcomed.



*the hands that reach will touch*

## 4. Hebrew Catholic Culture

Our invitation to you is to help us establish, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with the blessing of the Holy See, a dynamic and exciting stream of Hebrew Catholic culture. The following are some of the components of this emerging presence in the Church.

### 4.1. Internet Learning Centre

Our web site network (see links below) acts as our information centre. It is currently under construction, and growing steadily each week. It includes, among other things:—

- Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflections — with Hebrew Catholic perspective
- Scripture Readings
- Scripture Commentary with Hebrew Catholic annotations
- Scripture Meditation
- Salvation History
- Hebrew Catholic devotions
- Questions and Answers
- Links to quality articles, journals and materials via the Internet.

Please visit:

- [www.hebrewcatholic.org](http://www.hebrewcatholic.org)
- [www.hebrewcatholic.org.nz](http://www.hebrewcatholic.org.nz)

### 4.2. "We are family"

Our Hebrew Catholic stream within the Church, witnesses to the Biblical model of the **Holy Trinity**, and Our Lord's constant references to mutual in-dwelling. Hebrew Catholic culture is inclusive and rests comfortably in all parts of the Church. It builds up members to perform their tasks anywhere in the Church where they are situated. Our culture seeks always to strengthen any measures which support the loving, caring, and protective aspects of "being family".

### 4.3. Hebrew Catholic Spirituality

Our spirituality is strongly and emphatically **Messianic**; that is:

- **Scriptural;**
- **Eucharistic;**
- **Evangelistic.**

Thus our members become progressively well-versed in and formed by:—

- regular **reflection and meditation on Torah and Gospel** readings and themes;
- a profound love of **Eucharistic worship** in the Sacrifice of the Mass and other Blessed Sacrament devotions;
- a loving and dedicated response to the Church's call to the **New Evangelisation** — the outworking of God's appointed role (in both the Old and New Testaments) to bring back into His family all who are separated in any way and wish to return. We are actively engaged in the general mobilisation of the whole Church in this special calling. More about this later!

We often use Our Lord's own words, "..... proclaim the gospel to every creature". The word gospel, as is well known, in this context comes from the old English 'God-spell,' the 'God-word'. Our Lord's command was thus essentially, "Be the Gospel (the Word of God) to every person you meet". And, yes, Our Lord thereby does indeed mean we are to make His message of love and reconciliation available to everyone in the world. Sadly, this has sometimes been misinterpreted and led to the most unfortunate outcomes in the past. The Popes from the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, however, have given a truly Biblical expression of this privileged vocation: to make disciples within every nation, wherever His Word is received.

#### 4.4. Hebrew Catholic Celebrations

We celebrate a wonderful calendar of both Jewish and Catholic festivals and fasts. The intertwining of both traditions is always mutually supportive and very inspirational.

Our celebrations combine traditions of worship as well as enjoyment in an atmosphere of family gatherings.

#### 4.5 Dance, song and fine foods.

Warm family hospitality has always been a distinctive feature of both Jewish and Catholic traditions. The combination of these in Hebrew Catholic culture is **doubly so!** These are an integral part of belonging to God's Household, and are therefore considered to be a high priority.

In our Hebrew Catholic culture we are **all, always**, learning new ways to express the joy, fun and sheer delight in being blessed by God as His family members. It is an occasion of special enjoyment when we can include visitors, or people who are not members of our Church but who wish to be associated in some way with this apostolate. No one, if we may be emphatic, need feel excluded. Those of other faiths who choose to celebrate the message of this apostolate — but for their own private reasons are not Roman Catholics — are loved and included in our collective devotion and homage to God.

## 4.6 Our Culture Enhances Our Personal Vocation

All who join our Hebrew Catholic movement learn something of their own and each other's background and culture. No one can be expected to "have all the answers" when they begin on this path. It takes time for us all to "find our feet" and learn about our heritage as Jews and Gentiles. It is not a sin to be human! Learning about Salvation History, the Church, the wonderful teaching of our Faith and so on, occurs gently over a course of many years. What we especially try to promote is **respect** for one another's background, and **gratitude**, that in the Hebrew Catholic culture, we learn to share and participate in each other's traditions as members of our Messiah — Our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him we are all brothers and sisters.

## 4.7 Key Understandings

The Hebrew Catholic culture highlights very beautiful understandings to help us live out our calling in everyday life of the Church. These include among others:—

- **"Preparation"** The understanding of what it means to see one movement such as Judaism, or a person's vocation in it, to be a preparation for another. Thus we learn the joy and dignity of transformation through Jesus Christ Our Lord. It is particularly important in our understanding of this role of "preparation" that mysteriously, the role continued contemporaneously with an expanding consciousness of on-going fulfilment.
- **"Fulfilment"** The understanding that something coming to **fulfilment** such as the sacrifices of the Temple, may be transformed by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord into something which continues to reflect God's intended original purposes, whilst giving a new and enhanced perspective to His greater glory. Fulfilment certainly allows people of Gentile origin to become full members of the Church without "becoming Jews first." Nevertheless, it also permits, as we explained above, the process of coming to fulfilment over a period of time.
- **"Continuity"** The understanding that if we are part of the New Covenant, though we may come from either Jewish or Gentile backgrounds, we share God's Covenantal blessings. These **continue** to flow, **fulfilled** as we have said, and **transformed** in the Light of Christ.

This understanding of "transformation" is a precious gift of the Holy Spirit. It enables us to see that, in the Light of Christ, members of the Church from either Jewish or Gentile background can — with great spiritual benefit — offer, at any time, prayer and devotional practices.

- **"Fulfilment For All In Jesus Messiah"**  
The issues of "preparation", "fulfilment", and "continuity" are reflected upon in a continuing narrative approach in our articles — "[Fulfilment For All In Jesus Messiah](#)"  
— "[Role of the Jewish People After the Coming of the Messiah](#)".

#### 4.8 Our Literature

An impressive Hebrew Catholic literature has been quietly growing over the past 50 — 75 years, especially. Our International web site provides an excellent service in making recommended resources available. These include books, papers, magazines and journals, C D's and DVDs.

[www.hebrewcatholic.org](http://www.hebrewcatholic.org)

#### 4.9 Hebrew Catholic Practice

Individual Hebrew Catholic religious practice varies among its members in the same way as any other spirituality does across the vast expanse of the Church. Our apostolate seeks to train all its members, insofar as they wish to participate in a cross-section of Jewish and Catholic devotional practices. These include among others:

- Hebrew Catholic participation in the Holy Eucharist;
- Hebrew Catholic custom in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament;
- Honouring Our Lady Miriam as Mother of the Messiah:
 

Ark of the Covenant	Glory of Jerusalem
Gate of Heaven	Joy of Israel
Mother of the Church	Honour of our people
(Litany of Loretto)	(Book of Judith 15:10)
- Making and using a Hebrew Catholic mezuzah and holy water font;
- For all males — wearing a kippah (skull cap) especially at prayer and worship (to honour God's Presence).
- Using a tallith (prayer shawl), as appropriate.
- Following a Hebrew Catholic Prayer Book.

We pause at this point, since our next two sections (No. 5 and 6) will introduce a range of items for your consideration, dealing with prayer and worship.

#### 4.10 Institute of Learning

The Hebrew Catholic international apostolate includes a wide range of scholars, authors and gifted speakers. There is an increasing range of opportunities for attending study courses, lecture series and pilgrimages associated with our work.

As opportunity permits, we have begun the early stages of planning to establish our own educational and training schemes under the oversight of a well organised appropriate institute in due course. We mention this to express our intention to promote formal studies in Hebrew Catholic matters, at all academic levels:

E.g.

- Hebrew and Latin languages
- Jewish and Christian History
- Jewish / Christian relationships:  
Uncovering ancient pathways and  
building new ones.
- Teaching of the Church

## 5. Prayer and Meditation

We offer a few templates (see footnote #) for your consideration to guide you in your personal prayer life. We are conscious of our deficiencies and hope that if you would like to help us develop them further, your suggestions will be welcome. These items can be located easily on the front page of our web site.

- **Private Oratory:** an on-line booklet suggesting how to dedicate a place in your home to prayer and meditation. The tradition of setting aside a time and place for regular prayer existed even before the Prophet Daniel and has been taken up in the Church since the earliest times.
- **Rule of Life:** an on-line booklet introducing the opening Prologue to the Rule of St Benedict. It is a gem of the Christian vision in its own right. St Benedict was a significant channel by which much Jewish spiritual insight was made available to 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century Christians. It continues to inspire its readers, in families and various groups, with its straightforward Biblical approach to following the Lord.
- **Mitzvah Office:** an on-line booklet presenting a simple model of prayer (based around the Angelus) suitable for recitation morning, afternoon and evening, combining ancient Jewish and Christian words and actions. The model is easily supplemented with one's own personal favourite prayers and devotions.

(Note: work has commenced on the compilation of a Hebrew Catholic Siddur — liturgical prayer book.)

- **Scripture Meditation:** an on-line introduction to a Hebrew Catholic approach to meditation. Although some sections are incomplete (under construction) the material available offers:-
  - An explanation of meditation as Lectio Divina with a practical Hebrew Catholic element;
  - Several support papers dealing with various aspects of Lectio Divina for individuals and small groups;
  - Guidelines for home-groups and leaders to reflect each week on the following Sunday's Scriptures;

We consider regular reflection on the Liturgical Scriptures to be of immense value in the spiritual formation of individuals as well the effectiveness of the Church's evangelisation.



- **The Gospel To Every Creature:** the Hebrew Catholic Vocation: an on-line booklet presenting just one approach to an over-view of our vocation as individuals and as a body in Jesus Christ — Yeshua HaMashiach. It is not prescriptive, but seeks to demonstrate that the beautiful privilege to be "a light unto the nations" is fulfilled for Hebrew Catholics in their dedication to the New Evangelisation gaining mobilisation throughout the whole Church.

Footnote: # As will be repeated several times in our leaflets and booklets, these are **not** prescriptive (that is, requiring rigid compliance or conformity), but describe what is actually in use already which anyone can use, and adapt to local needs and custom.

Some readers, on viewing these "templates," as we have called them, observing how little Hebrew or overt Jewishness they contain, may wonder how "Hebrew Catholic" they really are. We would like to point out that almost everything they contain has been either written by Jews or has been shaped on Jewish models: e.g.

- Sacred Scriptures;
- Collect prayers;
- Meditation.

Even the prologue to the Rule of St. Benedict is a beautiful reflection incorporating major themes from the Torah, in the Light of Our Blessed Messiah.

Having said these things, we remind our readers that our corner of this great apostolate has two broad aims — whilst focusing at all times on our Blessed Messiah:

- to help restore Jewish culture, spirituality, hospitality and worship within the life and religious practice of the Church; and
- to promote devotions which incorporate links with ancient Hebrew origins and features and which enhance our understanding of being members of the Household of God — the Family of God.

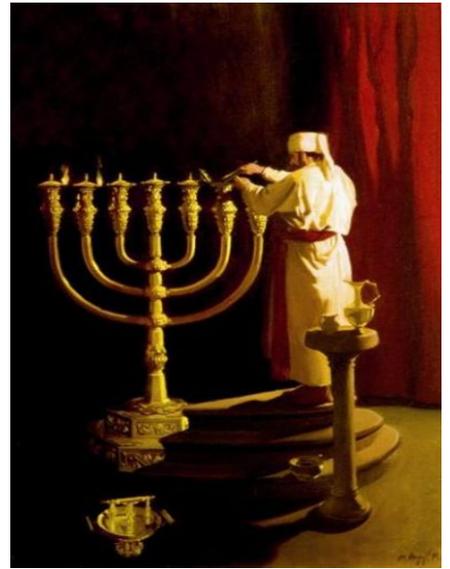
This enables Christians of Gentile origin to truly be an organic part of the Hebrew Christian stream emerging within the Church.



A Mezuzah  
Containing Torah



Holy Water Font



Attending the Temple Menorah

## 6. Hebrew Catholic Celebrations

All of our celebrations demonstrate the joy and jubilation of those who understand that life in the Church is Judaism fulfilled. Some Jews refer to themselves as completed Jews. Some Gentile members see themselves as having rediscovered the Jewish roots of their Faith. For us all these things are a cause of genuine celebration. We repeat our earlier comment: the following items are a description of just a few of the things already happening. **It will be evident, we hope, that all of these items described are an expression of joy of belonging to the Household of God — the Family of God.**

We offer a range of suggestions for Hebrew Catholics who are encouraged to lead or attend any of the following, according to their choice and custom. By way of introduction, our web site offers an on-line booklet:

- **"Lord of the Sabbath"**

We would like it to be observed that we are building on what is already in place within the Church's Liturgy and which has served so well as a fruitful stream of grace among the faithful. A second booklet available on-line provides sample or model "orders of service" for anyone who wishes to use any of the following suggestions.

- **"Hebrew Catholic Celebrations"**

### 6.1 **"Thursday Evening: Remembering the First Eucharist"**

We suggest a pause during prayers on Thursday evening when we can recall to mind momentarily the fulfillment of the Sinai Covenant in Our Lord's celebration of Passover — also to be His Passover Sacrifice within a few hours of being with His Apostles at the Last Supper. The on-line booklet, "Hebrew Catholic Celebrations" offers some suggested prayers and devotions.

### 6.2 **Friday Evening:**

In our on-line booklet, **"Lord of the Sabbath"** we talk about a Hebrew Catholic understanding of the Sabbath. There we explain how Yeshua HaMashiach — Jesus Messiah — took the whole meaning and spiritual treasury of Shabbat to Himself, and dispenses all its blessings to those who respond warmly to His call. Thus for many Hebrew Catholics, the day now serves in the Church to be the day of preparation, a function it served throughout Salvation History. It denotes a time for us to prepare ourselves for the greatest honour we will ever know in this life-time: to join with Christ's Body, the Church, in offering the Sacred Eucharist on the Lord's Day.

Just as over the course of Salvation History, the Sabbath played a role in the preparation of God's people for the coming of the Messiah, so now for Hebrew Catholics Saturday can continue to serve as the **Gateway to the Lord's Day**, a day of personal and collective preparation. Each week we enjoy the celebration of His Resurrection and thus the fulfillment of all that the Sabbath pointed towards. This is all the more effective when we prepare ourselves as befits the solemnity of the occasion and our dignity as His faithful members.

Sometimes, there can be lingering doubts concerning Saturday, Sabbath and the Lord's Day. We would be helped by remembering, as is expressed elsewhere in this booklet, that **Our Lord — Jesus Messiah — is our Sabbath**. In declaring, "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath," Jesus indicated something especially significant for the spreading of His message to the whole world. All of the Sabbath's significance, power and spiritual treasures are vested in Him. In Him we find our rest, our life, our total fulfillment. When we listen to Him, and follow His message as best we can in love and honest commitment, then we share in every gift of Sabbath. He is our Rest, our Life and all that we can hope for. We celebrate this great mystery when we share in His Death and Resurrection, which are the central focus of the Lord's Day and our Sunday Eucharist. Remember Our Lord's invitation:

**"Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest."**

(Matthew 11: 28)

A venerable tradition among some Hebrew Catholics is the honour paid to Our Lady, Mother of Our Lord, who has a special place in our devotions on Saturday. We find it therefore appropriate on Friday evening (the Biblical beginning of the new day) to include her, invoking her under the titles:—

#### **Our Lady Miriam: Mother of the Messiah**

- **Glory of Jerusalem**
- **Joy of Israel**
- **Honour of our people.** (Book of Judith 15: 10)

The on-line model for home groups to follow on Friday evenings is based on the traditional **Vespers of Our Lady** with provision for any customary prayers and blessings considered appropriate for the occasion. It can be as brief or as long as the members would like. It is, of course, only one way to celebrate this special evening. This can also be done in other traditional Jewish ways.

### **6.3 Saturday and Sabbath**

#### **Our Lady On Saturday**

Saturday has traditionally been a day given to praising God for the part Our Lady plays in Salvation History. Nothing could be more appropriate for the Christian recollection of what the Sabbath has bequeathed to our Faith, and its special role leading to the Lord's Day. The Sabbath in all its Biblical significance, as noted above, has been a profoundly spiritual preparation for the coming of the Messiah. It is in that sense we think of Saturday as the **Gateway to the Lord's Day**, in Hebrew Catholic custom. In the morning there is carried out by some (alone or in a group) a form of morning prayer corresponding to the traditional **"Office of Our Lady On Saturday"**. This very beautiful prayer prepares us spiritually for the Lord's Day and its prefiguring our life in Heaven: a life of restored peace and unity. Mary, or Miriam as we often call her, — "Gate of Heaven" — prepares us to celebrate each week her Son's Resurrection until He returns, as He has promised. We offer it as one approach which incorporates traditional Christian prayers.

## Traditional Sabbath Liturgy

We wish to emphasise that it is also very appropriate — and much to be encouraged — to conduct traditional Jewish liturgies.

These can retain their entire traditional format and composition, when offered in the Light and fulfilment of Jesus our Messiah. They would then bear testimony to the truth that the full purpose and power of the Sabbath are fulfilled in Him. Blessed be His Name.

### 6.4 **Saturday Evening: Moving From Saturday Into the Lord's Day**

This is a very precious time for those who wish to meet before evening descends, to welcome the Lord's Day. We do this with song, dance, prayer and special ceremony within the context of procession and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. So, before the day draws to a close, we also honour the Mother of Jesus as:

#### **Our Lady Miriam: Mother of the Saviour**

- **Ark of the Covenant**
- **Gate of Heaven**
- **Mother of the Church** (Litany of Loretto)

This is very much a family occasion characterised by joyful movement, procession, beautiful music, and short but elevating prayer accompanied by incense, Holy water and blessings; not to forget pleasant refreshments later in the evening to ensure we have time to greet one another properly, and get home safely.

Devotions, hymns and prayers for this very special occasion each week are available on our web site under: [Saturday Evening](#).

As the sun lowers, the last light of Our Lady's Day leads us to give welcome to a new day — the Lord's Day — and the first Eucharist of the new Sunday, the new week, the new creation.

The Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, as it were, crowns all that Sabbath stands for. In fact the first celebration of Sunday Eucharist (which is Saturday evening — even before sunset) — is an excellent opportunity to express our joy in preparation and fulfilment in our Lord Jesus Christ: a beautiful way to testify to the continuity and flow of blessings.

Hebrew Catholics attend a range of celebrations of the Mass — the Eucharist — Holy Communion — spread across traditional Latin and contemporary liturgies. No matter which one we attend, we carry within the soul the joys and graces associated with any sincere preparation God has enabled us to make.

## 6.5 Sunday Evening: Passing of the Lord's Day

Hebrew Catholics, as with any devout believers, may elect to attend Mass on Sunday evening — or may also find they are gratefully taking advantage of the last opportunity to "make it". In itself Mass is a beautiful way to bring the Lord's Day to an end and to let the new week unfold.

For those who have attended earlier worship, the lowering of the sun in the western sky signals the closing of the Lord's Day. It is easy to become pre-occupied with many important and worthy matters at this time. But if we can pause for evening prayer, no matter how briefly — even if only momentarily — to thank God for His gracious lovingkindness and blessings — how warmly He will respond to our gratitude. Sunday is a foretaste of the life for which God is preparing each of us. It is our closest experience of eternity in this life and it is a priceless gift from Heaven.

Either individually, or in a group we give thanks to our Lord for His Death and Resurrection, as we celebrate these events until His Glorious Return. The occasion could, in fact, be marked by a simple traditional thanksgiving after the evening meal. Meanwhile we are aware that these gifts are to be shared with all humanity and thus we pray for the extension of His Kingdom on earth, and our part in promoting this.

The on-line booklet, "[Hebrew Catholic Celebrations](#)" offers some simple items for the passing of the Lord's Day to mark this time appropriately and to prepare us to return to our daily work to the glory of His Most Holy Name.

## 6.6 During The Week: "Scripture Meditation"

There is an invaluable opportunity available each week to those seeking to know Jesus Messiah better. It is the chance for families and the teaching of their children as God commanded (Deuteronomy 6: 6 — 9 and 11: 19), or for two or three people to come together in the Name of the Messiah (Matthew 18: 20), where He promised to be in their midst. We are talking about the privilege to reflect together on the Sacred Scriptures appointed for the following Sunday's Eucharist. As the Church Fathers taught:

**"Not to know the Scriptures, is not to know Christ."**

Knowing Him in the Biblical understanding of the word, is essential if we are to fulfill our calling as Christians. A particular aspect of the Hebrew Catholic vocation is articulated in the Prophecy of Isaiah:

**"I will make you a light to the nations, that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."**  
(Isaiah 49: 6)

The Messiah came, in the fullness of time, to ensure this light would shine in every part of this world. Jesus Messiah said, "**I am the light of the world**". (John 18: 12) When we study, learn and meditate on His Teaching (especially His own words recorded in the Gospels) we become His light-bearers to those around us. In fact He even declared to His disciples, "You are the light of the world," meaning "Your light must shine before others; that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father". (Matthew 5: 14 — 16).

We have listed this activity of the apostolate under Hebrew Catholic Celebrations as the occasion is, indeed, a celebration of the Presence and Power of the Word of God in our lives, in the Church and in the world! We do not shrink from the effort involved just because it may be the end of our work week and we are tired and cannot concentrate. On the contrary, we find reflection on the Word of God (the Torah, Gospels, or any other Scripture) profoundly exhilarating and energising. It is an essential element of our preparation to witness to Yeshua Messiah — **to take** and indeed, "**to be** a light to the nations".

An important part of our apostolate is to help our fellow Christians and others to see and hear Jesus Messiah in **every portion of Sacred Scripture** and be able to share His message in simple language with whoever will receive it.

Our web site offers a simple approach for families or small groups to meet in Christ's Presence in their homes, or wherever, and reflect on the Divine Word. All that is needed to put this into practice is provided in the section: **Scripture Reflection**.

This group meeting can be any time during the week. Combining it with Vespers of Our Lady on Friday evenings would be, where appropriate, one possibility. It is always worth remembering Mary's last words recorded in the Bible:

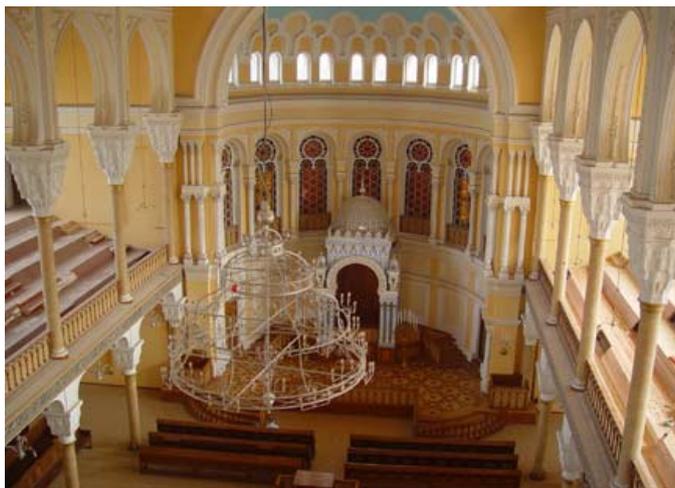
**"Do whatever He tells you!"** (John 2: 5)



Holy Water Font



Traditional Catholic Church



Traditional Synagogue

## 7. Responding to the Needs of the Church

The Hebrew Catholic presence in the Church is not a self-serving body of people focused on their own interests and concerns. They are committed to sharing the role of strengthening one another's faith, and being at the service of the Church anywhere in the world.

It is our hope that people reading this modest outline of our movement will choose to join us and participate in our various activities according to their situation.

It is a special intention in our prayers and offerings that God will bless us with a wide range of members whose interests and abilities will fulfill the needs of our apostolate. For some this would entail focusing on service through prayer; for others, the organising a havurah (group) meeting in their parish. There is a place also for those willing to take part in our training and be willing to visit centres in mission teams throughout the country to establish our apostolate there and help build up the Church. All can be involved, according to their circumstances, in any of the following:—

- offering regular prayer for our ministry, and the needs of the Church;
- deepening the knowledge of our **Biblical heritage** and how we can help Christians hold on to the Faith amidst growing anti-theistic opposition;
- training in how to **reflect on the appointed Scriptures** for the coming Sunday and spending time in frequent **meditation** in the Divine Word, to know Jesus Messiah more intimately;
- encouraging regular preparation for and participation in celebrating **the Eucharist of the Lord's Day**;
- promoting love of and devotion to the Lord present in the Most **Blessed Sacrament** of the Altar;
- helping people discern the distortions of religion and morality as well as the growing trends within our society in order to prepare our young people to deal with them;
- sharing Hebrew Catholic **song, dance and music**, including, sometimes, the use of Hebrew and Latin language;
- inviting those interested to join in our mission training and other activities.

## Conclusion

We certainly live in fast changing times. If you would like to join us or want to explore further our movement and its exciting apostolate in the Church we would love to hear from you. We are very much aware of the changes occurring in our contemporary world and believe our movement to be raised up by the Holy Spirit to serve the Church in these times.

**Blessed be the most Holy Name of God.**

**Shalom!**

**From an Interview with Archbishop**

**now**

## **Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke**

**[Question] What counsel would you provide to Hebrew Catholics regarding the preservation of their identity, and heritage, and life within the Church?**

**Archbishop Burke:** Well, I'm very inspired by Fr. Friedman's vision, and I believe that he is quite correct. The Venerable Pope John Paul II repeatedly called Catholics to the work of the new evangelisation (and) brought to our attention the "*de-christianisation*", as Pope Paul VI said, of the world. Nations which were once Christian, and strongly Christian, now were carrying out a life, to use Pope John Paul II's term, *as if God did not exist*." Pope Benedict XVI has talked about it as, "*the tyranny of relativism*", a secularisation that's taking place. So there's a need to live the Catholic faith, as Pope John Paul II said, with the enthusiasm and energy of the first disciples, of the first missionaries. I see in this a particular gift of the Hebrew Catholics because of the strong sense that is inherent in the Jewish faith, as I understand it, of God's presence with us in the world. It's absolutely contrary for a true person of Jewish faith to not have a sense that God is always with us, guiding and directing all the affairs of man and of the world. That is what we need to recover so much and of course, the Hebrew Catholic understands this in a particular way: the presence of Christ, now seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, but alive in His Church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I believe that the Hebrew Catholics have a particularly strong sense, almost a palpable sense of the work of the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, and that's literally true, and dwelling within the whole Church for the work of the salvation of the world.

So my counsel to the Hebrew Catholics would be to take up in a particular way the work of the new evangelisation to assist the Church in bringing the great gift of Christ alive in the Church through the Holy Spirit to the world, responding to that great hunger and thirst that's in every human heart, really, for the knowledge and love of God which our Lord Jesus Christ gives us. I believe that the Hebrew Catholics have this gift in a most particular way to offer and can help the rest of us to understand better how to carry out the new evangelisation and also to be more ardent in carrying out the new evangelisation. We cannot understand enough its importance, and we cannot be ever too ardent in carrying it out in our time. These are critical times, and the answer to the times, as our present Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI has so often reminded us, is a Person, and that Person is Jesus Christ.

## Appendix

### Hebrew Catholics

We encourage you to explore the well documented historical evidence of Jewish membership of the Church, from its beginning, and the flourishing Hebrew culture in the early centuries of Christianity. There are several sources which are accessible and genuinely helpful in providing reliable information.

#### 1. Association of Hebrew Catholics (AHC)

This Internet link will take you to a treasure chest of excellent materials. Some of the themes / topics you can explore include:—

- Fr. Elias Friedman, O.C.D., founder. His prophetic insight and writings continue to guide us as we evolve our apostolate in the Church.
- Insights, comments, articles by our long-serving International President David Moss.
- A wide range of articles by Hebrew Catholic and other writers.
- Differences between our AHC position and what is generally referred to collectively as Messianic Judaism. In the AHC we emphasise the total fulfillment of Judaism in the Catholic Faith; and that Jewish cultural elements displayed in our Hebrew Catholic prayer, worship and fellowship are a manifestation of this crucial, fundamental belief.
- Formal objectives and purposes of AHC.
- Books, CD's DVDs available from AHC.

#### 2. Vatican and Other Documents

We link to a few highly significant documents.

- ["Nostra Aetate" 1965;](#)
- ["Commission For Religious Relations With the Jews: Notes";](#)
- ["Jewish Christian Relations;](#)
- [Jewish Catholic Dialogue Since Vatican II;](#)
- [Jewish Virtual Library: Catholic Church.](#)

### 3. Wikipedia Documents

We recommend, among the huge range of papers:—

- [Jewish Christian;](#)
- [Hebrew Catholics;](#)
- [Second Vatican Council.](#)

### 4. Web sites

We recommend highly, the following:—

- [International web site of AHC](#) — David Moss, AHC President
- [Second Exodus](#) — Marty Barrack
- [Salvation Is From the Jews](#) — Roy Schoeman

