

AHC Havurah Newsletter

Volume 23 – March 2021

Dear Mishpochah (Family),

We want to wish you all a happy, healthy, and blessed 2021. It is already a cliché to say that we are happy to be past 2020 now. We think we can all agree that 2020 was one of the strangest years in our lifetime. Those of you who had to fight Covid yourself and in your family, you are in our prayers. We have been working from home since Mid-March of 2020, and that has been a blessing for both of us.

Many of us have not been able to get back to Mass in person for quite some time. We have been blessed to be able to attend in person with restrictions, of course, and yet it still does not feel “normal” yet. We are hoping that Lent and the Easter Liturgies will be able to take place in person this year. We teach RCIA together, and we have 2 catechumens and 1 Confirmand this year in our parish, and all of them are under 30. This is very encouraging.

This past year, we finally got the AHC St. Louis Zoom Havurah up and running. Such a blessing this has been for all involved. We have been meeting online since September of 2020. We generally have about a dozen or more attendees from all over the world. Our prayer and hope is that we can build an online community of Hebrew Catholics who are geographically separated and who have no in-person havurah to attend. We also hope that this Zoom Havurah will give rise to many more in-person havurah groups in diverse communities around the globe.

For those of you who want to know how we organize an online Zoom Havurah, here is our current custom: We meet on Erev Shabbat (Friday night) once a month. We start with a Shabbat ceremony of lighting the candles and praying over the challah (Shabbat bread) and wine. We then pray Vespers (Evening Prayer) together. We read a book together and discuss it. We are currently reading *The Bride* by Channah Bardan. She is a Hebrew Catholic who grew up as an Orthodox Jew, and she has seamlessly incorporated her Jewish and Catholic practices into her own family. The book has been inspiring and educational for all of us. The best part for us is the discussion and wisdom that comes from this very diverse group of Catholics from all over the world. We have individuals from Tasmania, Italy, England, Costa Rica,

Vermont, Massachusetts, Texas, and St. Louis. I am sure I am missing one or two other locations in the U.S. as well.

Our hope and dream is that many more of you will be inspired to start your own Zoom Havurah or start one in person in the coming months. We receive emails from many who ask about havurah groups in their area. Most often, we have to tell them there are no local groups, but we encourage them to start one. If you need help getting a group started, then please contact us so we can show you how easy it is to form your own local havurah. Starting small is the key, especially these days. But how nourishing to our souls to meet together in the joy of Yeshua!

We feel strongly that as this world becomes even more unfriendly to Catholics and Jews that our havurah groups will be a safe and encouraging place for us to meet and grow in our Lord Yeshua, Miriam, and His Church.

With Much Love in Yeshua, Miriam, and Yosef, and wishing you all a blessed Lenten Season,

Ken and Flora Wilsker

PS. Please remember the AHC in your prayers and consider a financial gift so that we can continue to develop materials and havurah groups for more Catholics around the world.

Additional note from the AHC

We have created an Events page on our website. When you click on the “Events” menu item in the blue ribbon running across the page, it will take you to a page where various events are posted, including the Zoom havurot for St. Louis and Toronto. When you click on one of the events, you go to a page where the event is described and, generally, the Zoom link is present.

If you email ahc@hebrewcatholic.org with the time, date, place, description, and any links for your havurah meeting, we will post it on the website.

Also, visit our web store, we have added a number of new books.

News from the Hebrew Catholic Diaspora

From Bnei Miriam Havurah in Tasmania,
by Br. Gilbert

Shabbat Meal Done Bnei Miriam Havurah Style



I have decided to share how we often celebrate the Friday Night Sabbath meal at our Beit Achim as a part of our Bnei Miriam Havurah activities. I describe below last week's Shabbat here at the Beit Achim (House of Brothers) at St Joseph's Hidden Place.

I hope everyone had a refreshing Shabbat. I find that it always refreshes me when I make the effort even when I don't feel like it. I wasn't feeling very inspired and was unwell and drained and didn't think I could be bothered. But Br John-Joseph pushed me on. I am glad he did!

We said our Catholic evening prayer in the chapel. After that we moved to the lounge room where I lit the candles (as we didn't have a woman present) and said the traditional *bracha* (blessing) in Hebrew. Then we started with chanting the *Yedid Nefesh* (Beloved of Soul). We chant the first two words of every paragraph in Hebrew and then chant the rest in English. After that we start chanting the Psalms of *Kabbalos Shabbos* (we use the orthodox Jewish siddur), and we usually chant the two opening words in Hebrew, and then chant or read the rest in English, taking turns. Then we chant or sing the *L'cha Dodi* (Come my beloved)--the chorus we sing in Hebrew, and the verses we chant in English, all taking turns for each verse. For us as Catholics and Hebrew Catholics, our inner intention sees this as invoking the presence of Our Lady who is the Sabbath Bride and Queen (first in thought, later in time). Then we chant or say more Psalms followed by the Mourner's *Kaddish* (we send those with living parents out of the room) and the reading from the *Zohar Terumah*. For us Hebrew Catholics, this alludes to Our Lady and the mystery of the Alef Tav (et).

We then say a little bit of the Evening *Maariv* prayers, including the *Shema*, in both Hebrew and English. Usually, we chant the first line in Hebrew loudly – *Shema Yisrael, Adonai Elohaynu, Adonai Echad* [Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one]-and then the second line in an undertone in Hebrew--*Baruch Shem Kavod Malkhuto Le-Olam Va-ed* [Blessed be the Name of His Glorious Kingdom for ever and ever].

Brother John-Joseph then usually reads the first paragraph of the *Shema* in Hebrew. Then others read the other paragraphs in English. Then I say the blessing of the children (Aaronic blessing) over the brothers and all present, and we then sing *Shalom Alechem* (with a traditional tune) that invokes the presence of the angels. The first verse we sing three times in Hebrew, and then we chant the others in English and conclude by singing the first verse again in Hebrew. Someone then reads the *King prayer* followed by *Aishes Chayil* in which we take turns chanting each line in English. We see this prayer as honouring Our Lady as the Shabbat Queen, and honouring her Shekhinah presence in all the women sitting as her mystical embodiments at the Shabbat Table. And we do the same with the following prayer, the *Askinu Seudasa*, which takes us into a mystical dimension of the Shabbat as the mystical field of sacred apples that is the mystical Meal and feast of the Divine King. In one sense, this is a beautiful way to prepare one's heart and mind for the Eucharistic Meal and Feast we call the Mass in English. The Shabbat Meal is the deep that is calling to deeper which is the Eucharistic Wedding Feast of the Lamb. We finish this section with the mystical prayer about the Most Hidden of Hidden. After this we move from our lounge room to our dining area (that I call our Passover Party Room) to the Shabbat Table.

Then we do the *Kiddush* (the Blessing on the Wine and Bread) and chant the *bracha* on wine in Hebrew. Then we go and wash praying the *bracha* in Hebrew and then we chant *lai lai* and *yai yais* on the way back to the Shabbat table. I usually dance round the table chanting before sitting down and then saying the *bracha* on the *challah* in Hebrew. And then we eat. After the meal we pray/chant the *Birkat Mazon* (Grace After Meals) in English. We finish by singing the two different versions we know of *Hiney Mah Tov* (How Good It Is). Starting at midnight the Brothers then take turns doing a late night holy hour in the chapel. This is the time when married religious Jews are involved in physical love making whereas as celibate Brothers we are uniting with the *Shekhinah* in Adoration to produce spiritual fruitfulness.

This is our way of doing the Shabbat Evening Meal and we have developed our own *minhagim* (customs) which remain true to the traditional Jewish Shabbat while expressing our faith in the Messiah and his Mother. We sometimes shorten it and others, especially with little children, may choose to do a much shorter version of the prayers preceding the meal. Each family or group will find its rhythm after some experimentation.

From the Havurah in Minnesota

Hi Ken & Flora,

I apologize I didn't get back to you sooner. I hope you are both well.

We are still meeting monthly via Zoom. We are studying the Ascension Press study of *Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life*. It is done in Israel and everyone is enjoying it.

We don't totally follow all the questions, but try to bring in more Jewish information. We watch the video on our own and meet for prayer and discussion of the video and accompanying book.

Sure hope we can meet in person soon

Blessed Lenten Season,

Tammy

From the St. Joseph Fellowship in Toronto: Deacon Mark and Sue Neugebauer

Our good friend, Fr Favin Alemao will be our next guest speaker on Zoom March 16. He will be speaking about the late Jewish Cardinal of Paris, Jean-Marie Lustiger. Please join us.



*Havurat Yosef
HaTzaddik*



ASSOCIATION OF HEBREW CATHOLICS TORONTO

The Fellowship of St. Joseph

Tuesday 7 PM

March 16, 2021

ZOOM

Fr Favin Alemao

Archdiocese of Toronto

Student of Systematic Theology in Rome

“Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger on the Ten Commandments”

Fr Favin is a beloved priest, speaker, and teacher who effectively combines Theology with practical Spirituality. Fr Favin will speak about the life and teachings of the late Jewish Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Lustiger. Many within and outside the Church see in Jesus a break away from the Torah (here as expressed in the Commandments). Cardinal Lustiger shows how Jesus preserves the heart of the Torah by following the Commandments. Cardinal Lustiger claims, beautifully and boldly, that even God follows the Commandments.

All are welcome.

NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED BUT CONTACT US

FOR ZOOM LINK;

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Please Join Us - All Welcome

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