

Jewish Roots of the Eucharist

Jewish Feast of Passover

- ✧ A lamb was sacrificed and its' blood was used to draw marks over the outside doors of Jewish houses so first born children would be safe from death.
- ✧ The first born children were saved through the blood of the lamb.
- ✧ The lamb had to be eaten to complete the ritual.
- ✧ There was a meal (the lamb), a sacrifice and a sign (the blood on the doorpost).
- ✧ The Passover is the Perpetual Institution, the memorial feast which continues to this day.

Jewish Sacrificial Traditions

- ✧ The sacrifice took the participation of three parties: the sinner, the victim and the priest. The lamb (victim) is sacrificed as a replacement for the sinner. The sinner lays hands on the lamb's head and the blood of the lamb receives the sin which defiled the lifeblood of the sinner. The throat of the lamb is cut and the priest pours the blood of the lamb out on the altar as an offering and a sign that the person's sins are forgiven *through the blood of the lamb*.
- ✧ This Jewish sacrifice was not complete until both the priest and the sinner had eaten the meat of the lamb before the day had ended. God and man were in communion: God through the blood of the lamb and the sinner and priest through the meat they consumed.
- ✧ Hebrew law said there was no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. Jesus changed the need for animal sacrifice forever when he was sacrificed for our sins on the cross.

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Catholic Theology

- ✧ According to Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples during the actual Passover feast in Jerusalem.
- ✧ The sacrifice of the Last Supper is re-presented or made present at the celebration of the Mass (Anamnesis or Zikkaron).
- ✧ At Mass, through the Zikkaron, we participate in the Last Supper each time we are present. We hear *Jesus* speak the words and see his Body sacrificed for our sins. The priest stands *in persona Christi* (in the person of Christ) at the altar.
- ✧ We complete the sacrifice and are brought into communion with God by eating the Body and drinking the Blood of the Risen Christ.
- ✧ This is the Perpetual Institution from the Book of Exodus; the unending Passover meal of the sacrificial lamb and the unleavened bread. We have a meal, a sacrifice and a sign.
- ✧ Catholics believe that after the consecration there is no more bread and wine. At the words of consecration they become the real Body and the real Blood of Jesus Christ.
- ✧ We are brought into communion with God as we eat Christ's body and drink the blood that is poured out on the altar for us.