

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE  
Maundy Thursday  
April 21, 2011

*A Recipe for Remembrance* (Exodus 12:1-14)  
Howard Bowlin+

Here is a question for all the food experts among us: What edible product contains the following ingredients? . . .

carob bean gum, guar gum, corn syrup, soybean and cottonseed oils, cultured cream, salt, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, whole wheat flour, riboflavin, gelatin, carrageenan, cheese cultures, modified food starch, molasses, xanthan gum, baking soda, monocalcium phosphate, cinnamon, vanilla, skim and pasturized milk, niacin, iron and thiamine mononitrate.

You are absolutely right if your answer is “Sara Lee Classic Cheesecake.” For most of us nonexperts, this is a mysterious list of ingredients. But to the baker, who is in on the mystery of their relationship to each other, the ingredients are highly intelligible.<sup>1</sup>

Good cooks are like good musicians, I think. A good musician learns the rules first. He practices major and minor scales until they become something that he doesn't even think about. She practices patterns of rhythm, counting them out carefully, until she plays them naturally at sight. And then the musician learns how to break the rules *creatively*.

If you want to learn to bake bread, you learn the rules. It takes flour, yeast, salt, and liquid to make a proper loaf. Mix the wrong proportion of these ingredients and you might get anything from a hockey puck to the blob that ate Knoxville!

Tonight's reading from the Old Testament is a recipe, a recipe for remembrance. It is a particularly appropriate lesson to be read on Maundy Thursday, the day in the liturgical year when we remember and reenact the last meal that our Lord ate with his disciples. Jesus was a devout Jew, as were his disciples. They were gathered together for the Passover Meal, a meal which had its origins in the story unfolded in our reading from Exodus.

New Testament scholar Gail O'Day says that “[t]he Passover feast, . . . is a day of remembrance, in which the worshiping congregation remembers God's deliverance of them from slavery. The feast brings to active memory both their old life as slaves (that they must eat the lamb in haste) and their new life as liberated people of God. It is as this people that Jesus and his disciples gathered to celebrate the Passover together, . . .”<sup>2</sup>

That is, of course, what we are about here this evening. We are a worshiping community, drawn together around our Lord's table, remembering and reenacting our deliverance from sin and death. Because we have been freed from the power of sin and death (however we may respond to that deliverance) we also celebrate together our new life as the liberated people of God.

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<sup>1</sup>PIS, 2165, adapted.

<sup>2</sup>*New Proclamation* (Series A, 1998-1999), 262.

A young boy and an old man were seated together on a dock fishing. They were talking about many things: why the sunset is sometimes red; why the rain falls; why some creatures live in water and others require air. As the old man was baiting the boy's hook, the youngster looked up at him and asked, "Does anyone ever see God?" The old man reflected for a moment as he looked out across the sylvan lake and the lush foliage surrounding it and answered: "Son, we can't see God, but we can see where he has been."<sup>3</sup>

In remembering and reenacting the Passover meal that our Lord shared with his companions, we see where God has been. We see where God is now.

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<sup>3</sup>/S, 2609.