



Moderator's Easter Message 2015



Easter came early for me this year, yesterday I celebrated the Passover Seder with the Wellington Jewish Council.

The Passover Seder retells the story of liberation from slavery of the people of Israel from Egypt. It is this story that paints the backdrop to the events of Easter which we celebrate.

"Had not the Holy one liberated our people from Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would still be enslaved."

Had it not been for the grace of God!

What impressed me during the meal was that everything you do (touch, taste, smell, see and hear) poses this question: "Why do we do this?"

The question opens the door to story telling and explanation. Stated in the negative, you must not give an explanation until the question is asked as that would be a waste of a good explanation.

Are we giving explanations in response to the quest of the human soul?
Or are we answering questions no one is asking?

The meal has a movement during which you experience the bitterness and oppression of slavery and then the delight, wonder and responsibility of freedom.

As you eat bitter herbs dipped in salt water you remember the suffering of slavery and your taste buds send shivers up your spine.

As you drink from the second cup you spill drops of wine on your plate to remember the ten plagues and give thanks. God did more than enough for us to give thanks.

As you drink from the third cup you recline to the left (a sign of freedom).

As you journey through Easter, may you experience the suffering and pain of Good Friday. May the suffering Christ speak from the cross with words of solidarity to all who suffer, and of forgiveness and reconciliation with all who are estranged from God and one another. May you experience the delight, wonder and responsibility of Easter Sunday. May you shout "He is risen" as your declaration of freedom, becoming a life-giver and story teller. "Had it not been for the grace of God . . ."

*Right Rev Andrew Norton
Moderator*

Postscript:

It is the custom of the Passover Seder to invite strangers and the poor to this meal. Freedom is a wonderful privilege to be shared with others. It is an obligation of those who are blessed to be a blessing to others; for those who are liberated to liberate others. A good news story is one to be shared! May your prayers and action this Easter also include the more than 20 million people who are enslaved in the world today.