

Lux Center News



September 28, 2015

Listen to the Bells--Hear the Horns

As I adapt to daily life at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, I have begun to appreciate the sound of the bells. The bells at Sacred Heart help us keep track of the time throughout the day and sound when it is time for worship. The use of bells in the Church dates back to the fifth century, when Saint Paulinus of Nola introduced them in association with a church. Church bells are rung today to summon the faithful to prayer. Bells are also used on the altar during the Mass.

The *shofar*, one of the oldest and most primitive of wind instruments, is a ram's horn. The *shofar* is mentioned approximately 68 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. In ancient times, it was blown to herald the beginning of each month (the New Moon), to intimidate the enemy, to declare war, and to call the populace to assembly. It was sounded at the coronation of a king or queen and it still significantly proclaims the "kingship" of God.

Today, the *shofar* is sounded on the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as a call to worship, an actual call to awaken people to self-examination, to repentance, and to *return to the Lord and listen to His Voice* (Deuteronomy 30:2)

The *shofar* brings to mind the Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22) in which Abraham sacrifices a ram in place of his son, Isaac.

Whether we hear bells or horns, they can be used to *make a joyful noise unto the Lord*. (Psalm 98.4)

Have you ever heard the sound of a *shofar*? Come hear Mr. Harvey Padek blow the *shofar* and learn the history of this instrument on Wednesday, September 30th at 9:45 a.m. in the Sacred Heart lobby. He will also be at St. Francis de Sales on Wednesday at 11:50 a.m. in the Dining Room.

The Jewish Fall Holidays

Fall is a time of many Jewish holidays. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the holiest holidays, begin the season. The evening (all Jewish holidays begin at sundown and end at sundown) of Sunday, September 27th begins the seven day holiday of Sukkot. While Sukkot was originally an agricultural holiday and still celebrates the fall harvest in Israel, today it is more symbolic. Its roots are Biblical as it states,

"You shall live in booths seven days in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 23:42-43)

Thus, it commemorates the 40 year trek through the desert to the Promised Land. The primary symbol of Sukkot is the sukkah, a hut of temporary construction with a roof covering of branches. All meals are eaten in the Sukkah for the duration of Sukkot.

The holiday season ends with the holiday of Simchat Torah, literally meaning “rejoicing with the Torah.” This year Simhat Torah falls on October 5th. The Torah is the holiest book of the Jewish People and consists of the Five Books of Moses. The holiday emphasizes that the Torah is the inheritance of every single Jewish person. In the synagogue, the final section (last verse of Deuteronomy) of the Torah is read, and immediately following the cycle begins anew by reciting the first verses of Genesis. During this joyous holiday, all Torah scrolls are removed from the holy ark and are carried around the synagogue amidst singing and dancing.

The Jewish Fall Holidays, that all occur in the Hebrew month of *Tishri*, begin with a time of reflection and prayer and end in renewal and celebration. These holidays begin with a focus on the individual and end with an emphasis on community. Joining together with synagogue communities, friends and families make this season one that is filled with activity and enrichment.

Ms. Bonnie Shafrin

Director of the Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies
at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

414-529-6966

bshafrin@shsst.edu