

next day, Donghua Li won a gold medal for the Swiss gymnastic team in the 1996 Olympic Games. (2)

When we gather at the Lord's table, we are reminded that there is One who cheers us on in the game of life. We are reminded that we are people of hope.

The Lord's Supper had its origins in the Jewish Passover, the remembrance of the night that God sent death upon the first-born of all the Egyptian households but "passed over" the households whose doorposts were covered by the blood of the lamb. It was this incident that led to the Israelites gaining their freedom from slavery in Egypt. The Passover tradition begins with the youngest child in the family asking the father, "Why is this night different from other nights?" This is the father's cue to begin telling the Passover story. (3)

When our Jewish friends eat this meal at Passover, they celebrate their freedom from the bondage of Egypt and the new opportunities for life that have been given them. We also think of the freedom that Christ gives us from the bondage to sin, guilt, and death. We are a people of hope because of what Christ has done for us.

Finally, we come to the table because of our common faith. This table reminds us all that we belong to him. It reminds us that despite the fact we gather as different people from different backgrounds, male and female, young and old, rich and poor, through the shed blood of Jesus Christ we are united in a common faith.

The word "sacrament" comes from the Latin word *sacramentum*, which originally referred to the oath of allegiance to the emperor taken by a Roman soldier. Whenever we receive the Lord's Supper, we are repeating an oath of allegiance to Jesus Christ, our Emperor. (4) We are not here tending a dead tradition. We are paying homage to a living Lord.

So why do we gather at the table? Because we are a community of faith. Because we have a common hunger. Because we have a common hope. Because we share a common faith. Let us go to the Holy Table to break bread and to drink the cup together.