

Great Thanksgiving
(*Casting Away Idols*)

Invitation:

All are invited to the table set for sinners.
All are invited to the table set for those with heavy burdens.
All are invited to the table set for the least in the eyes of others.
Come and sit and feast upon the unmerited favor of God.

Confession:

Our ways are not your ways and our thoughts are not the same as yours.
We pretend to know and understand more than we really do.
We come before you, who dwells in clouds of unknowing,
struggling to humble ourselves to listen to your gentle whispers of shalom.
We come to the table of a teacher who loves to sit with our questions,
the one who sees in struggles and journey a gift greater than answers.
Be with us now in the silences, the laughter, and gentle conversation,
as we sit with Jesus in this place. Amen.

Absolution:

One: Jesus desires one thing, that we might all receive and share in love.
In the presence of Jesus Christ, feel a loving embrace.
Others: Jesus desires one thing for us all, that we might all receive and share in love.
In the presence of Jesus Christ, feel a loving embrace.
All: Thanks be to our compassionate God. Amen.

Thanksgiving:

One: Our God is love and lives among us.
Others: God loves me, you and all, even them.
One: Our God is positive energy bringing light to our understanding.
Others: In God there is no negativity at all, only an exuberant YES!
One: With God we join in laughter, dance and play.
Others: Here is where God delights in what we do.

One: You are the God who knows our ignorance and our foolish speculations.
You laugh at the false idols we have enslaved ourselves to.
False gods of paper and print.
False gods of ideas and ancient thoughts enshrined by our ancestors.
These gods do not see, nor hear.
These gods do not move, nor evolve.
They are stuck, unmoving, and unchanging,
but you, O God live in the moment.
You are alive and always ready to playfully imagine new things.
Our reality is so small, with so much yet to explore, question and know.
Our understanding of "In the beginning" has only scratched the surface.
Our understanding of the diversity of humanity is in its infancy,

for humans are so much more complex than simple binary explanations.

So we join with people from cultures and languages all around the globe to listen for your prompts for new questions, evolving ideas, and a deepening desire to know more. We join with those who dwell in dimensions that we have only begun to investigate around your throne of grace. With them we join in praise and thanks giving for all your questions:

One: Whose imagination planned creation?

Others: It was love's.

One: Whose creativity brought everything to birth?

Others: It was love's.

One: To whom does the universe belong?

Others: To Love.

One: Who watches over those in need?

Others: Love does.

One: Who sets those in need, free?

Others: Love does.

One: You are love and Jesus was a vivid expression of your presence.

Jesus did not make the law an idol.

Jesus felt free to embrace the law in fresh ways touched by love and compassion.

Jesus did not make tradition an idol.

Jesus felt free to be a contemporary expression of your loving presence.

Jesus did not make reason an idol,

because the sacrifices of love often makes little sense at all.

Jesus did not enshrine experience as an idol.

Jesus was free to be surprised by every fresh opportunity to love.

Jesus never made social position an idol to be worshiped.

Leaving honor behind, Jesus embraced the power of love,

as a humble servant stooping down to wash

those who had bent the knee to the gods of

wealth, safety, and self-preservation.

Jesus invites us to put away our idols and love one another.

Jesus did not seek to make his own life an idol.

During a celebration of Passover, Jesus took bread.

The bread set aside to remember with love those still in bondage.

Jesus blessed and broke this bread with prayer, then said:

“Take and eat, this is my body broken and given for you.”

Jesus invites us to put away our idols and love one another.

Jesus did not seek to make his own life an idol.

After the Passover meal, Jesus took the cup of hope.

Jesus blessed the wine with prayer, then said:

“Let’s share this cup together. It is filled with my blood,
poured out in humble celebration of God’s eternal covenant of grace,
the promise that love will cover a multitude of sins,
not just for us but for everyone.”

Jesus invites us to put away our idols and love one another.

We want to put away our idols made by human hands and intellect.
We want to embrace a living love that is for all creation,
a love that we cannot control, the love we see and proclaim
in this mystery of faith that we boldly proclaim:

All: Christ has died so love would live.
Christ arose so love would live.
Christ comes again so that love will never end.

One: Questions, Mysteries, Trembling Thoughts
pour out your love upon this bread and wine
fill them with your presence so they might be for us
the body and blood of Christ.

Questions, Mysteries, Trembling Thoughts
pour out your love upon our very human lives
fill them with your presence so that we might be for others
your church, the generous body and compassionate bride of Christ.

Questions, Mysteries, Trembling Thoughts
pour out your love upon us gathered here.
Free us from the false idols to whom we have enslaved ourselves.
Free us to dream dreams and see visions.
Free our holy imaginations and creativity
and the courage to stay with you as you made all things new.
Allow us to be caught up in awe of your dynamic existence.

All: We ask because we believe the love of Christ compels us.
We ask because we believe the loving gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit frees us.
We ask because we believe that you are the Eternal yes, who is excited about
what Love creates. May you be worshiped and adored as we join with you to
explore, everything! Amen.

One: Now let us pray in the style that Jesus encouraged us to:

All: Sacred Silence, Loving Compassionate Grace,
You are such a blessing and have empowered us to bless, now and always.
Provide for our daily needs as you empower us to meet the same needs in others.
Forgive us for the pain and suffer we have caused others, just like we are enabled
to forgive the pain and suffering others may have caused us.

Lead us in the way of forgiveness, generosity and grace,
and deliver us from even the desire for revenge, greed, and hate.
For you are love and light and peace, forever. Amen.

Prayer after communion:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for allowing us the gracious privilege of partaking of this holy mystery found in Jesus Christ. We lay all our idols at your feet, for you are the living God. You are love. We have experienced you in Jesus, and it has transformed our souls beyond our understanding. Now send us forth to be good news to those who hear only bad. Send us out to be an expression of your loving presence so that you may touch others too with healing and hope for tomorrow. Amen.