

Great Thanksgiving
(Holy Week)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We are to count it all joy this holy season
when we fall into various trials,
knowing that as our faithfulness is tested we will gain perseverance,
and believing that all of this is necessary for us to be perfected in love,
filled with grace and lacking nothing the world needs for its healing.

We seek to find the blessing when we are reproached;
when we are persecuted for the sake of the voiceless and powerless;
when we are falsely accused of evil intentions, evil actions, and of being a threat to decent
society.

We struggle to turn the other cheek;
to walk the extra mile;
and to rejoice and be glad.

We keep being surprised by fiery trials,
yet we try to rejoice in them for they allow us to enter into fuller communion with You,
and as we open our hearts we find a fuller revelation of Your glory.

So today we join with all who struggle and suffer upon the earth
and glorify with them Your holy name.
We join with all the martyrs in heaven
who have joined the celestial hosts around Your throne to loudly proclaim:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

You are holy and so is Jesus who has shared our sorrows and who is well acquainted with our
grief.

Christ entered a world where a king would plot the death of a child,
forcing a flight into Egypt,
even as other young children were slaughtered to bring peace to jealous fearful hearts.

You are holy and so is Jesus who followed Your Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted:

to use privilege to quench personal hungers;
to use privilege to gain personal power;
to use privilege to gain personal acclaim.
Jesus instead did not cling to Divine privilege,
no, instead aligned his life with the poor, the outcast, the rejected, the questionable,
with known sinners.

Jesus did not cling to the privilege of Divine authority,
no, instead spoke the simple truth in stories,
a truth rejected by credentialed, the learned, and the wise of this world.

Jesus did not cling to the privilege of Divine power,
calling down a strike force of ten thousand angels to destroy his tormentors,
no, instead took upon himself the projected sins from this world and died upon a cross
with the common criminals for the sake of a better society.

Jesus did not cling to the privilege of being a teacher,
but humbly cared for his students,
breaking protocol to wash their feet.
The invitation of the Gospel is to follow Christ's example.

Jesus did not cling to Divine privilege
when he took the bread symbolizing all those oppressed by sin.
With joy and thanksgiving, Jesus shared it with all, saying:
"Take and eat, for this is my body given for you."
The invitation of the Gospel is to follow Christ's example.

Jesus did not cling to Divine privilege
when he took the cup symbolizing the suffering caused by sin.
With joy and thanksgiving, Jesus shared it with all, saying:
"Everyone, drink with me; This is my blood poured out in sacrifice
to testify to the validity of God's gracious covenant of forgiveness
with not only you, but with all creation."
The invitation of the Gospel is to follow Christ's example.

We embrace Your invitation to follow Christ's example and
we endeavor to lay down our own privilege to bring Your salvation
more fully into the world. With every fiber of our being we seek to embrace
this holy mystery we see lived out in Christ even as we proclaim:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Breaking Heart, Tears of Grace
fall upon these gifts of bread and wine
reveal in them the body and blood of Christ
the lamb of God sacrificed for the salvation of the world.

Breaking Heart, Tears of Grace
fall upon the gift of our lives, our privilege and our pride
reveal to the world, Your Church,
the loving presence and compassionate bride of Christ
the lamb of God sacrificed for the salvation of the world.

Breaking Heart, Tears of Grace
fall upon the parched, dry, lives of all who need You:
Soften hardened hearts;
Untangle made up minds;
Free those in bondage to what has always been;
Bring a new hope of resurrection to abundant life.

Following the Christ who emptied himself of every privilege for our sake,
Open to the Spirit that pours out freely every good and perfect gift,
Amazed by You, Creator of a Universe we have only begun to explore,
May You receive from me and everyone I convince to join me,
all the praises that pour from my lips,
all the good works that spring from my heart,
all the brilliant hope I release into the world,
and all the glory due Your name.

Amen.

And now as those whose only privilege is to follow Christ, let us join together in praying his prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine in the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**