

Great Thanksgiving
(The Way Forward)

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.

You are our light when we have lost our way:

a pillar of fire at night

and a pillar of cloud by day.

You are our bright and morning star,

leading us to freedom from our bondage to sin.

You are our beckoning call,

drawing us to the safe bosom of our Protector and Provider.

We are here today because You poured forth Your grace upon those who sacrificed before us.

Now it is our turn,

to open our lives to that same grace and give to You our all.

We are here today because You shared Your great wisdom with those who came before us.

Now it is our turn,

to have faith in the leading of Your great Spirit and commit ourselves to do Your holy will.

We are here today because in the past You have chosen to dwell in the praise of our ancestors.

Now it is our turn to praise You.

Now it is our turn to humble ourselves before You.

Now it is our turn to join with all the hosts of heaven, with angels and archangels, with all the saints in glory who surround Your throne and say:

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

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest!

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

Hosanna in the highest!

You are holy and so is Your Son our savior Jesus Christ,

The Way we seek,

The Truth we seek,

The Life we seek.

We know that at this very moment Jesus stands at the door of our Church and knocks.

We can hear the Galilean call: "Come and follow me, and I will make You fishers of men."

Christ's command echos in our souls, "Go into all the world and make disciples of everyone."

Lord, speak for Your servants are listening and we are ready to obey.

We are ready to kneel down to serve the least of our society.

We are ready to wash the feet of the tired and weary stranger.
We may not have much silver or gold but in the name of Jesus
we are ready to encourage those who are crippled by oppression and injustice.

On the night of Christ's betrayal
Jesus took with joy and thanksgiving the bread of the oppressed,
broke it and shared it with the world, saying,
"Take, eat, this is my body given for You."
As the body of Christ, what are we to give?

After supper Christ took with joy and thanksgiving
the cup of suffering, the price of sin, saying,
"Drink with me, all of you, for this is the cup of my blood
poured out freely with faith in God's eternal promise
to forgive your sins and those of the whole world."
As the body of Christ, what are we to suffer?

As we contemplate our way forward as individuals and as Your Church
we look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.
And we trust our lives and future to this Holy Mystery
that we proclaim with our lips and display with our actions:

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

Star that leads the wise,
shine down upon these gifts of bread and wine,
reveal to our souls the presence of Jesus, his body and his blood.

Star that leads the wise,
Shine down upon the gift of our own lives, our hopes, our dreams and our vision forward,
reveal to our community, the church,
the presence of Jesus, his body and his bride.

Star that leads the wise,
Shine down upon us as we seek to discern Your way forward
for Your church, for our community, and for those whose need we have ignored.
Open our ears to Your voice.
Open our eyes to Your vision.
Open our hearts to Your compassion for those yet to know You.

We ask in the Name of Jesus.
We ask in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit.
We ask with Your gift of creative imagination, Almighty God,
so that we might bring You glory, honor and praise through our words and actions,
now and always. Amen.

Now as those seeking their way forward, let us pray as Christ taught us saying: