

*LITURGIES,
LEARNINGS
AND
PASTORAL RITES*



Order of Christian Workers

Welcome
to our Community
and to our life together;
we are honored by your presence,
for we know that the stranger,
as well as the friend,
brings us the Christ!
Please know that
all people are welcome
at this Table.
Our prayer is that you
will be with us often...

The Order of Christian Workers

P.O. Box 4155, Tyler, Texas 75712
(903) 595-3191

The Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Jackson, Abbot
www.orderofchristianworkers.org
journey-ocw@earthlink.net

St. Dismas House
1601 N. Bois d'Arc Ave.
Tyler, Texas 75702
(903) 595-0757

© *Order of Christian Workers, Advent, 2003*

✠
*Liturgies,
Learnings
& Pastoral Rites*

Contents

Introduction	Page 2
A Brief History	Page 5
A Glossary	Page 7
Eucharistic Celebrations	
Gathering, Word, and The Peace	Page 10
A Mass of Joy	Page 15
A Mass of Sacred Reunion	Page 22
A Mass of Reconciliation	Page 29
A Mass of Gratitude	Page 36
The Sacrament of Holy Baptism	Page 42
A Liturgy of Healing	Page 45
A Liturgy of Holy Union	Page 52
A Rite for Godparenting	Page 59
Sacrament of Reconciliation Between Two People	Page 62
Prayers of	
Blessing & Healing	Page 65
A Litany for a Companion	
Near Death	Page 68
Mourning, Remembrance, And Gratitude	Page 71
A Funeral Liturgy	Page 73
A Rite for the Blessing of a Home	Page 83
Amazing Grace (hymn)	Page 88
Learnings	Page 89
Notes on Liturgy of Holy Union	Page 94
Resources	Page 97

Introduction

Welcome to the fifth edition of our liturgical Rites.

Our format in this latest edition is to divide the previous, single edition into two new booklets: ***Liturgies, Learnings & Pastoral Rites***, which includes the weekly Communion services (including new Eucharistic versions), Baptism, and Healing—as well as the pastoral rites: a Rite of Holy Union, a Liturgy of Godparenting, the Sacrament of Reconciliation of Two People, Prayers for various occasions, a Litany for a Companion Near Death, a Funeral Liturgy, a Liturgy for the Blessing of a Home, as well as a Glossary and a section we call “Learnings”; a separate booklet, ***Lenten Rites***, includes the weekly Lenten Mass, Maundy Thursday Agape Meal, and the Good Friday Stations of the Cross.

The Order of Christian Workers is a nondenominational, ecumenical, spiritual community. We, as Companions, come from many religious and spiritual traditions and backgrounds throughout the U.S. and abroad, which allows us to celebrate and honor diversity. In the process of living and acting daily in the midst of that diversity, we have found that we need an anchor, a common lexicon of our life together...and so, over the years, our common liturgies have come to be the cornerstone of Community gathering and expression.

It is not our desire or intent to create an “authorized” statement of personal belief or Community expression, but rather to offer an outline of celebration and action, around which we might gather and tell our stories of God’s place in our lives and hearts. Consequently, we write and re-write these pages every few years, adapting the communal words to our continuing discoveries and growth, yet maintaining the original theme of a shared journey to the heart of God.

Perhaps the last known words of the wonderful monk, Thomas Merton, will convey our intended spirit and focus as an Order:

What we are asked to do at present
is not so much to *speak* of Christ
as to let him *live* in us
so that people may find him
by feeling *how* he lives in us.

That is, of course, a demanding process, and as we continue to struggle in and for community, we remind ourselves of the varying gifts of others, as well as the grace of God. And as we live and grow together, we find that the words of another monk, Brother Toby McCarroll, evidence the process itself: “All we really have to share are our stories of how we live.” Our stories, like the spiritual drama in these pages, tend toward the lessons of our Teacher among his own *havurah*: gathering... struggle... sharing... forgiveness... understanding. And then we begin the drama again!

As we increasingly understand that our liturgy, our work, and our life in community are, in fact, “spiritual” rather than “religious,” open rather than rigid, grace-full rather than overly controlled or self-righteous, then the words in this book have more sense and more life to us, and those words then flow from our hearts and souls, rather than simply drone from our lips!

Consequently, the booklets are meant to be spiritual guides for us as we continue our ministry of servanthood to others...and receive their ministry to us.

We remind ourselves that the primary intent of prayer is to *listen* (with *all* of our senses!) before, during, and after our petitions... and ultimately to simply offer thanks. Therefore, prayers herein are not meant to be “orthodox” in either content or form, but rather are meant to be as guides to expressing what our souls utter; if one wishes to change any or all to meet personal belief or expression, that is certainly appropriate. Also, we pray as “*we*,” even in personal prayer, as a reminder of our oneness in the Body of Christ.

“Liturgy” (from the Greek root meaning “the work of the people”) is a matter of the children of God expressing their lives in a drama of God... and so the liturgical dramas offered herein are intended to be *alive, passionate, and reconciling*; we may grow to understand that there are no perfect words in any vocabulary or religion or spiritual path to express the Ultimate in all places at all times, except those, of course, which emanate from our hearts and souls. The Eucharist (“thanksgiving”)—our sacred meal together—is our central focus and celebration, regardless of the Community occasion.

The section of “*Learnings*” is simply a collection of reminders of discoveries we have encountered along The Way. You may want to write your own learnings for personal and/or group reflection.

The “*Resources*” section denotes books which have been helpful to various pilgrims as we’ve searched for the historical/historic Jesus; for the spiritual life; for the means of developing and nurturing community; for ways to understand and obtain recovery; for ways to understand and enact servant-leadership; and for means to express our own pilgrimage.

The “*Glossary*” offers brief meanings to special words or names we use, especially those which may not be familiar to all people.

As we continue to adapt and revise these liturgies to the needs of our Community, we will appreciate whatever ideas or discernment *you* wish to offer or commend.

As you read and/or use this book, you might want to also visit our website: www.orderofchristianworkers.org to learn more of our life and work together; email contact with us is also available on the website, as well as information on publications, posters, etc.

May we come to know—through sharing and celebration—the joy of the Original Blessing in our personal and common lives....

✠ Fr. Tom, Abbot

A Brief History

“St. Dismas House” was opened as a House of Hospitality at 1601 N. Bois d’Arc in Tyler, Texas, on May 9, 1993, by Father Tom Jackson...and it was from there that struggle and joy and Community blossomed.

Father Tom, ordained an Episcopal priest in 1968, had worked in various ministries throughout the U.S. (as a parish priest in both the inner city and the suburbs, and as director of a United Campus Ministry), and concurrently completed Ph.D. studies in clinical psychology and hypnotherapy, serving as director of a community mental health center, a diocesan counselor, and a pastoral counselor/therapist. In 1990, he decided to form an ecumenical, spiritual community of Companions throughout the country, and named it the “Community of Hope“; in 1992 he went to learn and work with the Roman Catholic “Andre House” workers in Phoenix. From those experiences, and through readings of the lives of Dorothy Day, Henri Nouwen, and others, he decided as Abbot, in 1993, to re-dedicate (and re-name) “The Order of Christian Workers” to work with the poor and struggling.

St. Dismas Community has become known regionally and nationally as a safe and sacred place for pilgrims who struggle along The Way: those with HIV/AIDS, those in various minorities, those working in Recovery, immigrants, children at risk, and those of various economic circumstances who wish to form spiritual community; thus, the Community has continually promoted dialogue and community-building through activities at St. Dismas House and through the monthly newsletter, *Journey*.

In the ensuing years, as more and more pilgrims from many different religious and vocational backgrounds became active in the work and spirit of the Order, various Companions have been blessed as monks and nuns, as servant-leaders committed to a lifelong involvement in the ministry and work.

None of the Servant-leaders or the Companions of the Order receive salary; all operating funds come from begging rather than grants or denominational budgets. After working under the “umbrella” of a local parish for several years, the Order was officially accepted as a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable and religious organization in 1996, and the continuing work is directed by the Abbot, with the supervision and approval of the Board of Trustees.

In these past years, several Houses have been renovated to provide sacred sanctuary for healing, work, prayer, and liturgy: St. Dismas House, St. Clare House, MaryHouse, St. Gandhi House, St. Dorothy Day House, St. Peter Maurin House, St. Oscar Romero House, St. Jude House of Children, and Sanctuary (Grace House and Hosanna House), all in Tyler. In solidarity of ministry, spirit, and work are: the Temenos Community (San Francisco) and the St. Francis House and Community (Birmingham, AL), as well as a new community—Christ Community—in Culver, Indiana. From such, Community grows...a contagious sense of new life and hope begins...and spirits soar to reunion with the heart of God....

How to reach us:

Order of Christian Workers

P.O. Box 4155

Tyler, Texas 75712-4155

903-595-3191

903-595-5183 (fax)

journey-ocw@earthlink.net

www.orderofchristianworkers.org

A Glossary

- Agapé** From the Greek meaning “love;” related to the concept of sacred fellowship and community, especially in terms of meals shared in communion; pronounced aga-pay.
- Bell** We ring a bell at various times in our liturgies to remind us of special, uniquely sacred moments of drama and remembrance.
- Buddha** The Fifth-century BC Indian philosopher and founder of Buddhism.
- Celebrant** The person designated to animate a liturgy or service.
- Clare** The Twelfth-century nun and founder of the spiritual community “The Poor Clares,” and spiritual partner of Francis of Assisi.
- Companion** A fellow pilgrim/community member.
- Crossing** The act of making the sign of the cross on one’s body as a remembrance of the Christ; designated with the symbol (✠) in this book.
- Damien** Damien de Veuster, Nineteenth-century monk who lived and died with lepers.
- Dismas** The name given to the criminal who was crucified with Jesus...and who was promised Paradise.
- Dorothy Day** The Twentieth-century laywoman and peace activist who founded *The Catholic Worker* and houses of hospitality for the poor.
- Eucharist** [from the Greek for *thanksgiving*] The celebration of the Last Supper; communion.
- Ecumenical** Universal, referring to the sharing of humankind’s spiritual journey, and denoting non-denominational or multi-denominational activities.

Father God/ Mother God	Expression of the all-inclusive essence of God, beyond gender or other human boundaries.
Francis	The Twelfth-century monk and spiritual founder of the Franciscan community, emphasizing the mystical union of <i>all</i> living things.
Grace	The gift of the unconditional love of God for all of Creation, seen and experienced in daily life.
Havurah	[from the Aramaic for <i>company of friends</i>] The love experienced in inclusive community and fellowship; pronounced “ha-voo-rah.”
Hosanna	[from Greek for <i>save us</i>] An exclamation of praise to God.
Martin of Georgia	Twentieth-century civil rights activist and spiritual leader, martyred in 1968.
Mary Magdalene	Jesus’ friend and companion and apostle, who remained committed to him throughout his ministry and death.
Mass	An abbreviated expression referring to the act of celebrating Communion.
Mohammed	Sixth-century prophet and messenger; founder of Islam.
Mohandas Gandhi	The Twentieth-century Indian Hindu mahatma; civil rights activist; teacher of peaceful civil disobedience; inclusive of all loving spiritual expressions to God; martyred in 1948.
Namasté	A Sanskrit word of greeting, meaning (briefly): The Divine (or Christ) in me greets the Divine (or Christ) in you; pronounced <i>nama-stay</i> .

Oscar

Romero

The Twentieth-century Roman Catholic archbishop who was martyred for his commitment to civil and spiritual rights.

The Peace

The act (especially during Communion) of greeting fellow pilgrims and passing the Peace of God among them with joy and celebration.

Sacrament

From the Latin word *sacramentum*, meaning “oath;” a rite or act in which the community acknowledges, in a special and sacred way, the Presence of the Christ within us.



Eucharistic Celebrations

The following Table liturgies have a common beginning:

Gathering

Greeting

Word

Prayers

The Peace





THE GATHERING

*We gather in respectful quietness...
and a bell is rung to bring our attention to
our presence together.*

[A song may be offered]

THE BECKONING

Celebrant: Namasté: the Christ-Spirit within me greets the Christ-Spirit within you!

People: *Namasté: the Christ-Spirit within us greets you!*

Celebrant: Beckoned or unbeckoned, the Reign of God is present among us!

People: *We open our eyes and our ears, our hearts and our souls to the Presence of the Christ within us and among us.*

Celebrant: We journey here as pilgrims, seeking that sacred reunion with God, with our spiritual Companions, with our spiritual selves,

People: *seeking the Gift who will beckon us to be members one of another in the Community of New Life.*

[The Celebrant welcomes all to the Celebration—especially those who are visiting for the first time—and offers any special intentions, and continues]

Celebrant: In anticipation of this holy Meal and of our opportunity to share this Life together, we always begin with moments of silence, to remember why God beckoned us to this place at this time...

[Silence is observed, and then]

We offer great thanks, praise, and gratitude, O God, for the grace which allows us to be together once again!

THE WORD

Readings

[Selections of ancient or contemporary wisdom and/or the life of a saint may be offered by Companions]

[A song may be offered after any of the readings]

Reflection

[A Companion may be asked or wish to speak on a matter of importance in his or her life]

The Gospel

[The people are asked to stand, and a bell is rung before the appointed Gospel is announced by the Celebrant or someone appointed:]

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of the Christ according to
_____.

[The reader concludes the reading by saying:]

Celebrant: The Gospel of the Christ.

People: Thanks be to the Christ for Living Truth.

Sermon/Homily

[The Celebrant or other Companion reflects upon the Gospel]

**Speak the Gospel at all times.
If necessary, use words....
St. Francis of Assisi**

THE PRAYERS

The Prayers of the People

[A Companion is asked to beckon the Community to open prayer, inviting petitions, prayers, hopes, and thanksgivings]

As we perceive the Presence of God in our midst,
we are called to be especially mindful of:

The Creation in all its wholeness...

The Family of all peoples in all places...

Our own families, both of origin and choice...

Our friends and neighbors...

Those who are close but far away...

Those who are far away but close...

Those whom we have trouble loving, including ourselves...

Those whom we have called enemies...

Those who are in daily need...

Those who suffer in body or spirit...

Our ancestors, both ancient and recent...

Those who have been recently born...or died...

Those who are seeking rebirth...

Those who hold public trust in all places...

Those who are in a state of change or sorrow...

Those who have a special need...

[The people offer their petitions and concerns, either vocally or silently]

And we celebrate the many blessings and joys of this life,
giving heartfelt thanks for abundant Grace:

[The people offer their thanksgivings, either vocally or silently]

In our passion to have You with us always, O Christ; in reflection on our moments in the wilderness of our lives; in our constant hope for a transformation of our hearts; in our gratitude for the promise of reconciliation...we recite, in one voice, the

glorious prayer of liberation which you taught us from the heart of God:

(ALL) *Our Creator in heaven,
Holy is Your Name;
Your reign has come,
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Strengthen us in the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the Dominion,
the Power,
and the Glory are Yours,
now and forever.
Amen. ✠*

Celebrant: *Our Eternal Creator and Healer, You forgive us
and all people of earthly transgressions:*

*People: as we empty ourselves, You offer us a new
fulfillment of love, of freedom, of acceptance,*

Celebrant: *as we know that You wish only for our health
and well-being;*

*ALL: we accept now, openly and in grace, Your
unconditional love and forgiveness,*

Celebrant: *even as we forgive ourselves and others for the
frailties of this life—knowing, too, that we are
one with You and each other in Your Presence;*

*ALL: strengthen us in new peace,
in new sight,
in new understanding,
as You guide us to the vision of the Domain of
Life and Hope. Amen.*

THE PEACE

Celebrant: In the Grace of forgiveness and acceptance, with the assurance of Love and New Hope amongst us, we always say to one another with great joy: The Peace of God be always with you!

People: *And also with you!*

[All those present greet and bless one another in joy and thanksgiving]

[Announcements or special intentions may be made after The Peace]

Following the Passing of the Peace, the Celebrant will announce the specific Thanksgiving and Consecration which will be used for the Celebration of that occasion:

A Mass of Joy **Page 15**

A Mass of Sacred Reunion **Page 22**

A Mass of Reconciliation **Page 29**

A Mass of Gratitude **Page 36**

*When asked by the religious authorities
to identify the Great Commandment.*

Jesus surprised and scandalized them by answering that there

were really two:

“You will love God

with all your heart

and all your mind

and all your strength...

and you will love

your neighbor as well.

*From these two commandments matters everything that has
ever mattered...”*

✠
A MASS OF
JOY

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

[A song is sung or a bell is rung]

Celebrant: Alleluia, we are beckoned to the Table of joy!

People: *We gather with thanksgiving in sacred havurah!*

Celebrant: Yahweh, our Creator and Holy Counselor, is within you!

People: *And also within you!*

Celebrant: Lift your hearts to God in love and celebration!

People: *We lift them in the love and the Spirit of the Christ!*

Celebrant: Let our hearts be filled with the joy and gratitude of the wondrous blessings we receive each day!

People: *Such grace calls us to celebrate always this joyous Meal of thanksgiving and remembrance,*

Celebrant: for You, O God, are the true desire of every heart and the treasure we can hardly name.

People: *May this drama of reconciliation remind us that You call our hearts to You in solidarity and Oneness;*

Celebrant: for you have filled our dust with Your Spirit, with the very Essence of Your Love!

People: *The feelings and passions You created reflect the earthquake of Your Love for us and for all of Creation,*

Celebrant: calling us always to be Your Family and to live Your Peace.

People: *Lover of all hearts, let us hear Your music, so that we may sing daily the words of Your song.*

Celebrant: Lover of all souls, remind us that we are
beckoned to be One with You and each other,
People: *as you deliver us from the terrors that haunt and
divide and consume us,*
 Celebrant: leading us to that holy place where we may
envision Your endless compassion as we come
to know the Spirit of the Christ;
People: *as we come to feel the Spirit of Christ;*
 Celebrant: as we come to express the Spirit of Christ in the
ministry You modeled in the washing of feet, the
healing of lives, and the simple Presence of
solidarity.
People: *It is through that Spirit that You continue to kiss
the earth and draw all of Your Creation to You:*
 Celebrant: all souls, all peoples, all creatures and living
parts of this island home;
People: *in that same Spirit, then, with one voice, we offer
our song of universal joy:*
 ALL: *Holy, Holy, Holy One,
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 Spirit of
God.
Hosanna in the highest! ✠*

THE CONSECRATION

Celebrant: On his final night of earthly life and struggle and
reflection, our Teacher gathered again in sacred
havurah with the men, women, and children who
had shared in his life, his ministry and his love;
and during the community meal, he took the
common bread [*a bell is rung*], said a blessing
over it, broke the bread, and gave it to his

companions, saying,
People: “As with my Body, this shall be your community sacrament of Love and Forgiveness and Grace.”

Celebrant: Let us eat this, sharing our struggles, our glories, our Community, and our love, now and forever,
People: knowing that it will always serve as a reminder of the holy food of Grace.

Celebrant: As the meal ended, he took the cup of common drink [a bell is rung], gave thanks for it, and said,
People: “This will be the Lifeblood of Grace and Righteousness, the very Wellspring of New Life.”

Celebrant: Let us drink of this, each and all, as a sign of our new, eternal Covenant, remembering his sacred words of memorial and hope:
People: “Do this always, now and forever, in thanksgiving and celebration for the Grace of God.”

Celebrant: We do give eternal thanks for endless Grace,
People: even as we pledge to live our Teacher’s command:

ALL: “Love one another as I have loved you.”

Celebrant: O Father God/Mother God,
People: Creator and Sustainer of all blessings in Creation;

Celebrant: God of Servants and Saints, both ancestors and present Companions;
People: God of the poor, the struggling, the afflicted,
Celebrant: those who too often stand alone, calling to You in us;
People: Creator of the Divine spark in our spiritual souls, inspiring us to be pilgrims, peacemakers, and holy fools;

Celebrant: God of (N....) and all of those whom we

remember and carry in our hearts and souls this day;

People: *God of the Christ, who lives within each of us, call us to Your Domain of true hospitality;*

Celebrant: *call us to humility and servant-leadership;*

People: *call us to learning and teaching and healing;*

Celebrant: *call us to presence and the courage of sacred action;*

People: *call us, each and every one, to the True Community of forgiveness and renewal.*

Celebrant: *Grant us strength in all of these endeavors,*

People: *remembering that You stand with us forever,*

Celebrant: *So that the Grace of this Holy Act will make us one body, one Spirit in Christ, that we may joyfully serve the world in Your Name. ✠*

[The Bread is broken]

Celebrant: *Alleluia! The Grace of New Life is given to us!*

People: *We share and celebrate these holy gifts!*

Alleluia!

THE INVITATION TO AND SHARING OF THE HOLY MEAL

Celebrant: *Gifts of God for the children of God. Take them in remembrance that the Christ does live within you, and that you are to share that Christness with all of Creation all the days of your life. Amen.*

People: *Amen.*

[The Elements are shared among the Community... And ALL people who seek the Christ within them are invited to receive the Eucharist]

[The Celebrant receives communion personally and for all those who are not physically present.]

THE COMMISSION

[*The Celebrant asks a Companion to lead the recitation*]

Companion: As we prepare to carry our lives and ministry to our brothers and sisters, in humility and commitment, we remember the commission from St. Francis: O Christ, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred,

People: let us sow love.

Companion: Where there is injury,

People: let us offer pardon.

Companion: Where there is discord,

People: let us seek union.

Companion: Where there is doubt,

People: let us acknowledge faith.

Companion: Where there is despair,

People: let us offer hope.

Companion: Where there is darkness,

People: let us shed light.

Companion: Where there is sadness,

People: let us enliven joy.

Companion: Allow us to console; allow us to understand,
allow us the Grace to love,

People: for it is in giving that we receive;

Companion: it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

People: and it is in dying that we are born to New Life!

Amen.

[*A song or other music may be offered*]

THE COMMUNITY BLESSING

Celebrant: O Holy One, lead us forth into the world in the peace and love of the Christ.

People: We go forth joyfully to live in that peace and love!

Celebrant: Lead us forth with the courage we see in blessed

St. Martin of Georgia, in blessed St. Oscar Romero, in blessed St. Mohandas Gandhi, and in all the saints around us.

People: *We go forth inspired to live in courage and hope!*

Celebrant: Lead us forth with the joy we see in blessed St. Francis and in blessed St. Clare and in all the saints around us.

People: *We go forth eager to live in joy and celebration!*

Celebrant: Lead us forth with the commitment and love we see in blessed St. Dorothy Day, blessed Mary the Magdalene, and in all the saints around us.

People: *We go forth committed to live in love and hospitality!*

Celebrant: Lead us forth into the Companionship we see in blessed St. Dismas, in blessed St. Damien and in all the saints around us.

People: *We go forth together to live in the gift and the strength of Companionship!*

Celebrant: Lead us forth in the knowledge that the Grace of God will always beckon our return to sacred community.

People: *We go forth and will return in the Grace of God!*

Celebrant: Let us reach out to each other in all sorts of embarrassing and encompassing ways,

People: *for it is only in reaching that we touch.*

Celebrant: We go, then, with the Blessing of God our Creator, God the Universal Christ, and God the Spiritual Manifestation of Grace and Hope, now and forever. ✠

People: *Thanks be to God!*

Celebrant: The Meal is ended... Go in peace, seeking justice!

People: Amen! So be it! Amen!
[A song or other music may be offered]



*If I, then,
your Teacher,
have washed your feet,
you should wash each other's feet.
I have given you
an example....*



A MASS OF SACRED REUNION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

[A song is sung or a bell is rung]

Celebrant: Rejoice! Our God of mercy and compassion is among us!

People: Alleluia! Our Christ of Grace is within us!

Celebrant: You beckon us, O God, to a banquet of New Life!

People: We gather at Your Table in hope and anticipation.

Celebrant: You continue to beckon us as Your beloved children,

People: even as we seek that holy reunion with You and each other—in heart, mind, and soul.

Celebrant: You continually remind us of our sacred kinship,

People: whatever our condition, whatever our need.

Celebrant: You lead us from the darkness of our wilderness

People: to the Light of our transformation.

Celebrant: You bring reunion with the inner passion of our hearts;

People: You beckon a reunion with the deepest dreams of our newborn souls.

Celebrant: In our stumblings and chaos and foolish obsessions,

People: You offer the reunion of Your very Self within us.

Celebrant: When we despair of any possibility of

reconciliation with You or with our brothers and sisters,

People: *You teach us again the melody and words of the song of reunion.*

Celebrant: When we are certain that our path leads us only to our endless nowheres,

People: *You beckon us to that glorious journey of The Way.*

Celebrant: When we are certain that we have lost every thing that we call absolute treasure,

People: *You offer reunion with every Grace that is the Gift.*

Celebrant: For that endless, abundant Grace which flows from Your Presence as a mighty river of blessings and New Life,

People: *we lift our hearts to You in joyous thanksgiving!*

Celebrant: In jubilation, we offer ourselves to You;

People: *in gratitude, we offer ourselves to each other in Your Name.*

Celebrant: And in Your Name, we will be in reunion with our brothers and sisters, following the example of Your life among us:

People: *food for the hungry, clothing for the naked,*

Celebrant: healing for the sick, community for the outcast,

People: *solidarity with the powerless, hope for the forgotten,*

Celebrant: welcome to our enemies, hospitality to the stranger;

People: *for often You come to us in the stranger's guise.*

Celebrant: In the mystery of Your love of reconciliation,

People: *in the Gift of Your fulfilling love within us,*

Celebrant: in the glory of all that You are, we sing with all of Creation our hymn of universal joy:

*ALL: Holy, Holy, Holy One,
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 Spirit of
God.
Hosanna in the highest! ✕*

THE CONSECRATION

Celebrant: We are reminded, in this sacred rite, that on the night before his trial and his ultimate tribulation, the Anointed One shared a meal of reunion and kinship with his *havurah*, his company of women, men, and children with whom he had shared a lifetime:

People: a lifetime of laughter and tears and passions and hopes;

Celebrant: a lifetime of work and ministry;

People: a lifetime of sharing and struggles.

Celebrant: And in the surprise that is his holy essence,

People: he washed our feet of clay and fear,

Celebrant: to remind us of our vocation in God,

People: to reunite us with our true selves.

Celebrant: And then he took the common bread, [*a bell is rung*], blessed it with holy spirit, broke it, and shared it with every soul, saying, “This becomes my Body within you, in the name of God; do this in remembrance of God,

People: BE this in remembrance of God, now and forever. Amen.”

Celebrant: He took the cup of common drink [*a bell is rung*], gave thanks for it, blessed it with holy spirit, and said, “This is of my very blood and heart, which I offer to you; drink this in

remembrance of the God who satisfies your
thirst for New Life;

People: *BE this for all who seek God within you. Amen."*

Celebrant: O Father God/Mother God, who gives us such
hope and promise to fulfill our discipleship,

People: *to love others as You love us:*

Celebrant: thank You for this Meal, this sacrament of
reconciliation, reunion, and remembrance;

People: *for all of Creation which abounds within us and
around us, allow us to be trustworthy stewards
of Your bounty.*

Celebrant: Remind us of all the saints, prophets, and
teachers of our past and present,

People: *that we may continue to learn, and then teach in
humility.*

Celebrant: Encourage us through peacemakers and holy
fools,

People: *that Your Domain may shine through us, too.*

Celebrant: Send Your Eternal blessings upon (N.) and all
those whom we carry in our hearts and prayers
each day,

People: *that we may remember their blessings and
kinship in our lives.*

Celebrant: Reunite us in the forgiveness and renewal of
True Community,

ALL: *and may the Grace of this Holy Act make us one
body, one spirit in the Christ, that we may
worthily serve all of Creation in Your Name.
Amen. ✕*

[*The Bread is broken*]

Celebrant: Rejoice! The Grace of New Life is given to us!

People: *Alleluia! We are anointed forever! Amen!*

THE INVITATION TO AND SHARING OF THE HOLY MEAL

Celebrant: Gifts of God for the children of God. Take them in remembrance that the Christ does live within you, and that you are to share that Christness with all of Creation all the days of your life.
Amen.

People: Amen.
[*The Elements are shared among the Community... And ALL people who seek the Christ within them are invited to receive the Eucharist*]
[*The Celebrant receives communion personally and for all those who are not physically present.*]

THE COMMISSION

[*The Celebrant asks a Companion to lead the recitation*]

Companion: As we prepare to carry our lives and ministry to our brothers and sisters, in humility and commitment, we remember the commission from St. Francis:

O Christ, make us instruments of your *peace*.
Where there is hatred,

People: *let us sow love.*

Companion: Where there is injury,

People: *let us offer pardon.*

Companion: Where there is discord,

People: *let us seek union.*

Companion: Where there is doubt,

People: *let us acknowledge faith.*

Companion: Where there is despair,

People: *let us offer hope.*

Companion: Where there is darkness,

People: *let us shed light.*

Companion: Where there is sadness,

People: let us enliven joy.
Companion: Allow us to console; allow us to understand,
allow us the Grace to love,
People: for it is in giving that we receive;
Companion: it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
People: and it is in dying that we are born to New Life!
Amen.

[A song or other music may be offered]

THE COMMUNITY BLESSING

Celebrant: O Holy One, as we go forth into our busy and
demanding world once again,
People: bless us with Your Spirit of peace and patience.
Celebrant: As we go forth to serve You in others,
People: reunite us with the courage and joy of all Your
saints, both named and unnamed.
Celebrant: As we go forth to find and live the vocation to
which You call us,
People: reunite us with Your spirit in ourselves.
Celebrant: As we go forth as Your individual children,
People: reunite us continually with the kinship of Your
sacred community.
Celebrant: As we go forth to offer Your blessings to others,
People: remind us to reach out in all sorts of
embarrassing and encompassing ways, for only
then will we touch.
Celebrant: For we know that the
Blessing of God our Creator,
God the Universal Christ, and
God the Spiritual Manifestation of Grace and
Hope does go with us all, now and forever. ✠
People: Thanks be to God!

Celebrant: The Meal is ended...Go in Peace, seeking justice!

People: Amen! So be it! Amen!
[A song or other music may be offered]



This is what
Yahweh
asks of you, only this:
to act justly,
to love tenderly,
to walk humbly
with your God...
Micah

✠

A MASS OF RECONCILIATION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

[A song is sung or a bell is rung]

Celebrant: O God—our Creator, Sustainer, and Counselor—we offer our heartfelt thanks for beckoning us to this Table of reconciliation and peace!

People: We thank You for caring about the void which sometimes exists within us and between us.

Celebrant: We thank You for the wisdom that You offered to us in the very person of the Nazarene, so that we may learn to be wise and loving in our relationships.

People: We seek Your sacred assistance in finding our true selves, and finding You in others.

Celebrant: We give thanks for the Nazarene's message that we are all children of God,

People: equally loved, equally gifted, equally human... even when we wish to deny the sacred in others.

Celebrant: We know deep within us that the Christ lives in our hearts and souls;

People: we seek ways of seeing and knowing the Christ in our brothers and sisters.

Celebrant: We come to You and to each other with certain fears and uncertainties from our past,

People: with memories of previous hurts and pain and struggles with other people.

Celebrant: We thank You, then, for helping us to stay in the present moment, to forgive ourselves of

limitations or failings or disappointments in our personal histories,
People: *so that we may celebrate our mutual struggles, that we may hear Your healing words among us.*
 Celebrant: We thank You for Jesus' model of humility and honesty, of empathy and compassion,
People: *so that we may now share such gifts within us and among us.*
 Celebrant: By beckoning us to be together in this holy meal of continuing reconciliation, You allow us to remember the shortness of life;
People: *You allow us to remember the importance of trust and solidarity with others, as well as ourselves;*
 Celebrant: allow each of us to search our memories, our hearts, and our souls to bring forth those gifts to share with each other,
People: *even as we forgive those experiences and emotions which brought us pain and separation.*
 Celebrant: We thank You, O Blessed One, for your Presence among us,
People: *for reminding us—in our brothers and sisters—why it is that we gather in anticipation and joy;*
 Celebrant: for we have much to learn from each other,
People: *even as we are called to nurture each other;*
 Celebrant: You gather us at the Table as a real and spiritual exclamation that we are members one of another,
People: *just as we are members of Your new family of grace.*
 Celebrant: Thanks be to God!
People: *Thanks be to God!*

THE CONSECRATION

- Celebrant: It was in such a spirit of reconciliation and solidarity that Jesus beckoned his spiritual family—his *havurah*—together on the last night of his physical life—
- People:* *friends who had known struggles, betrayal, confusion, and fear—*
- Celebrant: reminding them, each and all, of what they now possessed in the gifts of community,
- People:* *reminding them that each moment is both the end and the beginning of havurah.*
- Celebrant: He reminded every person at the Table that the children amongst them were the most vulnerable in life...and therefore our models of commitment,
- People:* *even as he reminded each of us that we, too, are the children of God.*
- Celebrant: As he looked at those faces—
- People:* *regardless of age or circumstance—*
- Celebrant: he said to each and all,
- People:* *“I bless you in your life,*
- Celebrant: *I bless you in your sacredness,*
- People:* *I bless you with all of my heart,*
- Celebrant: *I bless you with all of my soul.”*
- People:* *We come likewise to seek such acceptance and blessing.*
- Celebrant: Then he took the common bread of their life,
[*a bell is rung*]
- People:* *gave thanks, broke it, and blessed it with the words:*
- Celebrant: “This becomes sacred to us, for it will remind us forever of this Body we have together,
- People:* *this bread will become the soul of our Body!”*

Celebrant: And he took the common cup from the Table,
[a bell is rung]

People: *lifted it for all to see, gave thanks, and blessed it with the words:*

Celebrant: “This, too, is now sacred for all of us, for it will remind us forever of what gives the Body life;

People: *this cup will become the lifeblood of our Body!”*

Celebrant: O Father God/Mother God, thank You for bringing us once again to this Table of community,

People: *to love others as You love us:*

Celebrant: thank You for this celebration of our mutual needs and hopes;

People: *thank You for the never-ending promise of reconciliation and new life among us.*

Celebrant: Remind us continually of the models You have given us in saints and prophets, in friends and Companions,

People: *that we may continue to journey this path of both struggle and solidarity.*

Celebrant: Encourage us through peacemakers and holy fools,

People: *that Your Domain may live within us, too.*

Celebrant: Send Your Eternal blessings upon (N.) and all those whom we carry in our hearts and prayers each day,

People: *that we may remember their blessings and kinship in our lives.*

Celebrant: Reconcile us in the forgiveness and celebration of True Community,

ALL: *and may the Grace of this Holy Act make us one body, one spirit in the Christ, that we may worthily serve all of Creation in Your Name.*
 Amen. ✠

[The Bread is broken]

Celebrant: Rejoice! The Grace of New Life is given to us!

People: *Alleluia! Our Body is sacred forever! Amen!*

THE INVITATION TO AND SHARING OF THE HOLY MEAL

Celebrant: Gifts of God for the children of God. Take them in remembrance that the Christ does live within you, and that you are to share that Christness with all of Creation all the days of your life.
Amen.

People: *Amen.*

[The Elements are shared among the Community... And ALL people who seek the Christ within them are invited to receive the Eucharist]

[The Celebrant receives communion personally and for all those who are not physically present...and ends by saying Amen.]

People: *Amen.*

THE COMMISSION

[The Celebrant asks a Companion to lead the recitation]

Companion: As we prepare to carry our lives and ministry to our brothers and sisters, in humility and commitment, we remember the commission from St. Francis:

O Christ, make us instruments of your *peace*.
Where there is hatred,

People: *let us sow love.*

Companion: Where there is injury,

People: *let us offer pardon.*

Companion: Where there is discord,

People: *let us seek union.*

Companion: Where there is doubt,

People: *let us acknowledge faith.*
 Companion: Where there is despair,
People: *let us offer hope.*
 Companion: Where there is darkness,
People: *let us shed light.*
 Companion: Where there is sadness,
People: *let us enliven joy.*
 Companion: Allow us to console; allow us to understand,
 allow us the Grace to love,
People: *for it is in giving that we receive;*
 Companion: it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
People: *and it is in dying that we are born to New Life!*
 Amen.

[A song or other music may be offered]

THE COMMUNITY BLESSING

Celebrant: O Beloved One, as we venture out to continue
 this journey with one another,
People: *reconcile us with Your Spirit of forgiveness.*
 Celebrant: As we go forth to find You in others,
People: *reconcile us with the courage and unity of all*
 Your saints, both named and unnamed.
 Celebrant: As we go forth to declare Your reign,
People: *reconcile us with Your spirit among us.*
 Celebrant: As we go forth to offer Your blessings to others,
People: *remind us to reach out in all sorts of*
 embarrassing and reconciling ways, for only
 then will we touch.
 Celebrant: For we know that the
 Blessing of God our Creator,
 God the Universal Christ, and
 God the Spiritual Manifestation of Grace and
 Hope does go with us all, now and forever. ✠
People: *Thanks be to God!*

Celebrant: The Meal is ended...Go in Peace, seeking justice!

People: Amen! So be it! Amen!

[A song or other music may be offered]



We become members one of another

✠

A MASS OF GRATITUDE

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

[A song is sung or a bell is rung]

Celebrant: Thanks be to God!

People: *Thanks be to God!*

Celebrant: We have been given every gift of Creation;

People: *we have received the very gifts of life.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for the earth and air;

People: *may we show our thanks by keeping them pure.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for food to eat;

People: *may we show our thanks by feeding others.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for the clothes we wear;

People: *may we show our thanks by clothing the naked.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for the homes we have;

People: *may we show our thanks by sheltering others.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for our families;

People: *may we show our thanks by making a family of our world.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for our health and well-being;

People: *may we show our thanks by healing others.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for what peace we enjoy;

People: *may we show our thanks by refusing war.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for our mentors and teachers;

People: *may we show our thanks by showing wisdom.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for those who support us;

People: *may we show our thanks by offering solidarity to others.*

Celebrant: We offer gratitude for our children;

People: *may we show our thanks by protecting the most vulnerable among us.*

Celebrant: *We offer gratitude for our friendships;*

People: *may we show our thanks by being open to the needs of others.*

Celebrant: *We offer gratitude for work;*

People: *may we show our thanks by being honest in our endeavors.*

Celebrant: *We offer gratitude for our freedoms;*

People: *may we show our thanks by promoting justice.*

Celebrant: *We offer gratitude for Community;*

People: *may we show our thanks by celebrating our havurah.*

THE CONSECRATION

Celebrant: *On the last night of his life, Jesus of Nazareth called together his havurah,*

People: *to share, once again, the work and ministry to a wounded world.*

Celebrant: *At the Table of their common life together,*

People: *he offered, first, a thanksgiving of love and gratitude,*

Celebrant: *reminding himself and his Community of all the women, men, and children who had made their life full of joy;*

People: *he spoke of the difficulties and struggles among them, giving thanks for their growth and learnings.*

Celebrant: *And in the midst of this sacred meal together,*

People: *he took the common table bread [a bell is rung], gave thanks for it, broke it into pieces, and said,*

Celebrant: *“Whenever we break and share our Community bread in the future, let us always be reminded of*

the gratitude we have for the essentials of life;
let us always be grateful for the Body of our souls.”
 People:

Celebrant: In like manner, he took the common cup [*a bell is rung*], gave thanks for it, and shared it with all, saying,
 “As we have harvested and enjoyed this gift from the earth and the sun,
 People: *let us always reap the harvest of our work and ministry by sharing this cup forever.”*
 Celebrant: And then he thanked each woman, each man, each child for what they had offered to him,
 People: *even as every member of havurah hugged and blessed him in their own thanksgivings.*
 Celebrant: Oh, Father God/Mother God, keep us awake to our need for gratitude and grace,
 People: *awake to our blessings and kinship,*
 Celebrant: *awake to the possibilities of sharing,*
 People: *awake to the continuing harvest of solidarity;*
 Celebrant: with each day, awaken us to the wisdom of our ancestors,
 People: *to the lessons of sharing and intimacy which become the bread and wine of New Life.*
 Celebrant: We thank you for prophets, peacemakers and holy fools;
 People: *we thank you for the courage to follow their example of justice and charity.*
 Celebrant: Bestow Your cherished blessings upon (*N.*) and all those whom we carry in our hearts and prayers each day,
 People: *that we may remember their blessings and kinship in our own lives.*
 Celebrant: May we always be thankful for the forgiveness and renewal of True Community,

ALL: even as the Grace of this Holy Act make us one body, one spirit in the work, the ministry and the community of the Christ. Amen. ✠

[The Bread is broken]

Celebrant: Rejoice! The Grace of New Life is given to us!

People: Alleluia! We are anointed forever! Amen!

THE INVITATION TO AND SHARING OF THE HOLY MEAL

Celebrant: Gifts of God for the children of God. Take them in remembrance that the Christ does live within you, and that you are to share that Christness with all of Creation all the days of your life. Amen.

People: Amen.

[The Elements are shared among the Community... And ALL people who seek the Christ within them are invited to receive the Eucharist]

[The Celebrant receives communion personally and for all those who are not physically present.]

THE COMMISSION

[The Celebrant asks a Companion to lead the recitation]

Companion: As we prepare to carry our lives and ministry to our brothers and sisters, in humility and commitment, we remember the commission from St. Francis:

O Christ, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred,

People: let us sow love.

Companion: Where there is injury,

People: let us offer pardon.

Companion: Where there is discord,

People: let us seek union.

Companion: Where there is doubt,
People: let us acknowledge faith.
 Companion: Where there is despair,
People: let us offer hope.
 Companion: Where there is darkness,
People: let us shed light.
 Companion: Where there is sadness,
People: let us enliven joy.
 Companion: Allow us to console; allow us to understand,
 allow us the Grace to love,
People: for it is in giving that we receive;
 Companion: it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
People: and it is in dying that we are born to New Life!
 Amen.

[A song or other music may be offered]

THE COMMUNITY BLESSING

Celebrant: O Holy One, we go forth now into Your Domain
People: with thankfulness and joy in our hearts and souls.
 Celebrant: We go forth with all the saints,
People: knowing that Your blessings are abundant and continuing.
 Celebrant: We go forth eager to serve You in others, both known and unknown,
People: knowing that Your gifts of courage will sustain us.
 Celebrant: We go forth to be Your Body in the world,
People: for we have shared the food of Your sacred Meal.
 Celebrant: We go forth to beckon others to our life together,
People: knowing that in such kinship we will find You, as always.
 Celebrant: We go forth to sing hosannas of thanksgiving,

People: *reaching out in all sorts of embarrassing and encompassing ways to those who may join us in the song.*

Celebrant: For we know that the
 Blessing of God our Creator,
 God the Universal Christ, and
 God the Spiritual Manifestation of Grace and
 Hope *does* go with us all, now and forever. ✠

People: *Thanks be to God!*

Celebrant: The Meal is ended...Go in Peace, seeking
 justice!

People: *Amen! So be it! Amen!*

[A song or other music may be offered]



**What we are asked
to do at present
is not so much
to speak of Christ
as to let him live in us,
so that people may find him
by feeling
how he lives in us.
Thomas Merton**



A LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

The rite of baptism is a community liturgy within the celebration of the Eucharist; the rite begins after the Prayers of the People; the Abbot will designate an adult in the Community to act as Sponsor for the person being baptized; if the person being baptized is an infant or child, a parent or godparent will make the responses in trust for the child.

THE PILGRIMAGE

Celebrant: Within the ancient acts and traditions of communities of faith offering blessing to one of its members, in Your Name, to accept the freedom of New Life and the mantle of compassion, this community of spiritual pilgrimage now stands in witness of this pilgrim, blessing and affirming their intention to live a life of servanthood and commitment in the Body of Christ.

We bless this water and make it sacred, as an outward and visible sign of the inner and spiritual grace which You now offer and bestow.

[to the Sponsor(s)]

Please name this pilgrim.

Sponsor(s): *[the pilgrim's complete name is declared]*

Celebrant: *N., do you acknowledge the Presence of God in your life?*

Pilgrim: *Yes, it is God's gift of grace and strength and hope.*

Celebrant: Do you wish to be baptized in the Name of God

the Creator, God the Christ, and God the Eternal Spirit?

Pilgrim: *Yes, I wish to be signed by God's covenant;*

Celebrant: Do you accept this act as a spiritual washing of your soul in the Presence of God and of the community of Christ?

Pilgrim: *Yes, that I may be washed of any spiritual doubt that the Christ lives within me.*

Celebrant: Do you believe that this sacred ritual reminds you that you are God's own child forever and ever?

Pilgrim: *Yes, and such remembrance is that which sustains me.*

Celebrant: Therefore, do you intend to lead a sacred life of servanthood and discipleship, respecting Creation and all that lives therein?

Pilgrim: *Yes, I pray that I may share my person, my talents, my struggles, and my ministry as a servant of the Christ.*

[*To the Sponsor*]

Celebrant: Will you be a special spiritual friend to (N.), offering (him/her) your peace as befits a (brother/sister)-in-Christ, doing your best to walk with (him/her) on this sacred journey?

Sponsor: *That is my gift, my commitment, and my prayer.*

[*To the Community*]

Celebrant: Will each and all of you bearing witness to this sacred act do all in your power to encourage, guide, support, and comfort this pilgrim on this spiritual journey?

People: (loudly) *WE WILL!*

THE BAPTISM

Celebrant: N., we give you the spiritual name of _____;

[*a spiritual name is given, along with a description of the attributes*]

this name signifies your relationship as a spiritual family-member and servant to all of your brothers and sisters throughout your new life in Christ.

We baptize you in the name of
God the Creator,
God the Christ, and
God the Eternal Spirit. Amen!

People: Amen! So be it! Amen!

[*The pilgrim is called into the center of the congregated Community, where Companions lay hands on the baptized person, as the Celebrant voices a blessing for the entire Community*]

Celebrant: God our Father, God our Mother, God the Christ, God the Eternal Spirit, blessed are You who has invited this pilgrim, *N.*, whom we now bless, into a life of sacred service of You, of the Body of Christ, and of all the Creation.

God of Abraham, Moses, Job, Ruth, Esther, Mary, Mohandas, Mohammed, the Buddha—of all holy people whom You have called to lives of pilgrimage in Your spirit—bless now, in the name of the Christ who offers eternal freedom, our (*brother/sister*)-in-Christ, *N.* Amen.

We welcome *N.*, and acknowledge (*him/her*) as a living part of our life together forever. Amen.

Thanks be to God, our Creator and Sustainer!

People: Thanks be to God forever and ever! Amen!

Celebrant: In celebration of New Life, we say with great joy: The Peace of God is now within you!

People: And also within you!

[*The people greet and bless one another*]



A EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY OF HEALING

*The Community gathers in silence at the Table;
a bell is rung, and the Companion designated to act as
Celebrant then begins:*

THE GREETING & PRAYERS

- Celebrant: Alleluia! Beckoned or unbeckoned, the presence of God is among us!
- People: May we be blessed by the Christ-Spirit within us!*
- Celebrant: We gather in this sacred company, O God, seeking Your blessing of respite, Your balm of healing.
- People: Amid the tangled demands and busyness of our everydays, You always beckon us to Your Peace.*
- Celebrant: Your Presence is wholeness in our struggles.
- People: Your Presence is peace in our turmoil.*
- Celebrant: May You gather us to the health of Your bosom,
- People: so that we may offer amends to You, to ourselves, and to those with whom we live and struggle.*
- Celebrant: May each of us search our souls for the Christ-Spirit whom You have birthed within us;
- People: and, together, bless our common life in You:*

Celebrant: May peace be in this place, and in all who dwell herein;

People: we make our hearts peaceful in sacred community.

Celebrant: May we know that Your love surrounds us;

People: above us, below us, around us, within us.

Celebrant: May beauty surround us;

People: let us be open to perceive and receive it.

Celebrant: May sacred emptiness surround us;

People: that we may know our inner needs.

Celebrant: May deep healing surround us;

People: and flow within us, each and all.

Celebrant: May we open our eyes and our ears,

People: our hearts and our souls,

Celebrant: to the Grace of New Life;

People: to the Grace in our lives;

Celebrant: to the Grace in community;

People: all of which is the Grace of God!

Celebrant: Thanks be to You, O God;

People: and thanks be to our brothers and sisters;

Celebrant: thanks be for the wonders we are offered each day;

People: thanks be for all that we receive.

Celebrant: Thanks be for the endless gift of Your Creation:

People: the birds and beasts, the water and sky,

Celebrant: the limitless universe and the abundant fruits of this island home we call Earth;

People: the companionship of others,

Celebrant: the love we are given,

People: the gentle touches that we receive.

[A reading of the Gospel may be offered here]

Celebrant: Thanks be for the Gospel which reminds us daily that we are blessed in our poor spirits, in our grief, in our gentleness;

People: blessed in our hunger for justice, in our offering of mercy, in our quest for peace.

Celebrant: We rejoice that You have given us words to proclaim everything that You have taught us, everything that we need to offer each day:

All: *Our Creator in heaven,
Holy is Your Name;
Your reign has come,
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Strengthen us in the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the Dominion,
the Power,
and the Glory are Yours,
now and forever.
Amen.*

Celebrant: O Father God/Mother God, into Your healing and care we now offer ourselves,

People: knowing that You wish only for our health and well-being;

Celebrant: in our earthly concerns for others and ourselves, we know that You will hear our thoughts, our words, and our deepest hopes:

[Companions offer their prayers of struggle and thanksgiving, either silently or aloud]

Celebrant: Allow us to hear You, O Eternal Comforter and Healer!

People: Allow us to feel the special power of Your touch,

Celebrant: to experience Your special healing of physical or emotional pain,
People: of separation in our relationships,
 Celebrant: of resentments, jealousies, hurts,
People: of all other earthly concerns which distance us or separate us from You...
 Celebrant: that again we may know the healing of Your Presence in our lives.
People: We thirst for spiritual refreshment;
 Celebrant: we hunger for re-creation into wholeness.
 ALL: Anoint us, O God, with the Spirit of Your mercy!

THE BLESSING & LAYING-ON-OF-HANDS

[The people come forward to the Table, and, as they stand or kneel, the Celebrant (and an appointed Companion minister, if needed) proceeds to lay hands on each person, saying:

“Receive the healing power of your Creator and Sustainer into your heart, your mind, your body, and your soul”

or other healing words of God’s grace; the Celebrant will then ask someone present to bless him/her in a similar manner]

[Silence is maintained for some moments...a bell is then rung three times to awaken the Community to New Life...and the Celebrant continues]

Celebrant: We awaken to the sound of our continuing healing into New Life!

People: We are now truly awake to the healing power of God within us and amongst us!

Celebrant: For the Peace of God is now within you!

People: And also within you!

[All those present now bless and greet each other]

[A bell is rung as the celebration continues...]

THE CONSECRATION

- Celebrant: We gather at the Table, a place and a Spirit of perpetual hope and healing;
- People: Alleluia! Your mercy and healing is an ever-flowing stream of compassion and strength within us!*
- Celebrant: As You beckoned Your company of Companions together for the celebration of holy *havurah*,
- People: So you call us to share this celebration together in Your Presence once again,*
- Celebrant: Reminding us that we are healed and whole in the Spirit of the Christ.
- People: For he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and shared it with the words:*
- [A bell is rung]
- Celebrant: “Feed yourself and others with this Bread of New Life, for of such nourishment is the Christ within you.”
- People: And he took the cup of common drink, blessed it, and offered it to all, saying:*
- [A bell is rung]
- Celebrant: “My dearly beloved brothers and sisters, your thirst for New Life may now be quenched forever!”
- People: Let us share, then, these priceless Gifts we are offered!*
- [The Celebrant and another person then share the Gifts among the Community—saying “Receive the Christ-Spirit” and “The Cup of New Life” or other appropriate words—with ALL people who seek the Christ within them being invited to the Meal; after all have been served, the Celebrant receives the Elements for those who are not physically present, and then continues...]

THE COMMISSION

Celebrant: Alleluia, we have been healed and fed in a new and eternal Covenant!

People: *Then let us go forth with the commitment and commission offered by our Companion, St. Francis:*

Celebrant: O Christ, make us instruments of your *peace*.
Where there is hatred,

People: *let us sow love.*

Celebrant: Where there is injury,

People: *let us offer pardon.*

Celebrant: Where there is discord,

People: *let us seek union.*

Celebrant: Where there is doubt,

People: *let us acknowledge faith.*

Celebrant: Where there is despair,

People: *let us offer hope.*

Celebrant: Where there is darkness,

People: *let us shed light.*

Celebrant: Where there is sadness,

People: *let us enliven joy.*

Celebrant: Allow us to console; allow us to understand,
allow us the Grace to love,

People: *for it is in giving that we receive;*

Celebrant: it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

People: *and it is in dying that we are born to New Life!*
Amen.

THE COMMUNITY BLESSING

Celebrant: Let us go forth, then, with all the saints, to offer amends, to share forgiveness, to feed and heal and bless and beckon!

People: *Yes, let us go forth as many in One! Let us go forth to be the Body of Christ!*

Celebrant: For the Blessing of God our Creator,
God the Universal Christ, and
God the Spiritual Manifestation of Grace and
Hope goes with us all, now and forever. ✠

People: *Amen! So be it! Amen!*





A LITURGY OF HOLY UNION

[The Celebrant/Presider, as well as the couple, should review the “Notes on the Rite of Holy Union” which can be found on pages 94-97 .

When the people have gathered the Celebrant/Presider) begins:]

THE GREETING

Welcome and greetings to this sacred rite of love, commitment, and acceptance.

The celebration of commitment to a life together is a time for good wishes, feasting and joy. Jesus shared such an occasion in Cana of Galilee where, in his first miracle, he gave a sign of new beginnings by turning water into wine. The bond between two people shows us the mystery of the union between God and God's people, and between Christ and the church, and the Holy Scriptures point to the centrality of love as the principal sign of God's presence. Through the blessing of their love for each other and their children or family or friends, in good times and bad, the couple shares together in the spirit of Jesus Christ, and extend hospitality to others.

Today *N.* and *N.* come before each other and their friends and family and this community to make their promises and join the church in blessing God for their relationship. As members of the community, you witness their commitment and express your support by your presence and prayers.

THE DECLARATION OF CONSENT

[*The Celebrant/Presider asks the following*]

Celebrant: *N.*, will you accept *N.* as your partner in life, and promise to be united to (him/her) in love and support for each other?

I will. Blessed be God who visits me in *N.*'s love.

[*And to the other*]

Celebrant: *N.*, will you accept *N.* as your partner in life, and promise to be united to (him/her) in love and support for each other?

I will. Blessed be God who visits me in *N.*'s love.

COMMUNITY PRESENTATION AND COVENANT

[*The Celebrant/Presider addresses the congregation*]

Celebrant: From your experience of the lives and beliefs of *N.* and *N.*, will you honor this decision made by them to covenant a common life in sacred commitment?

People: *We will!*

Celebrant: Will you honor their promises of commitment and faithfulness each to the other?

People: *We will!*

Celebrant: Will you support and encourage them in their love, forgiveness, struggle, and joy of each other?

People: *We will!*

Celebrant: Will you continue to remind them—and each other in community—of the Christ-spirit within them?

People: *We will, by God's Grace!*

Celebrant: Do you, then, with joy and affirmation, present *N.*, whom you know well, to declare (his/her) commitment to *N.*?

People: *We do!*

Celebrant: And in that same spirit of joy and affirmation, do you present *N.*, whom you know well, to declare (his/her) commitment to *N.*?

People: *We do!*

THE WORD

Reading (Chosen by the couple, read by a friend or family member)

Reading (Chosen by the couple, read by a friend or family member)

The Gospel (Chosen by the couple, read by a friend or family member)

[Music or a song may be included here]

[The Celebrant/Presider or other person may offer a homily here]

THE VOWS

[The Celebrant/Presider asks the couple to face each other, to join hands, and to repeat, individually, the following:]

In the Name of God, I, *N.*, take you, *N.*, to be my spouse and life-partner, to have and to hold from this day

forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

[And to the other]

In the Name of God, I, *N.*, take you, *N.*, to be my spouse and life-partner, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

[The Celebrant/Presider asks each of the couple to repeat the following words, individually; each ring is blessed before the words are recited]

N., I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you; in the Name of God, I declare this.

[And the other]

N., I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you; in the Name of God, I declare this.

THE DECLARATION OF UNITY AND COMMITMENT

[The Celebrant/Presider offers suitable words, declaring the unity of these two people in a life-long commitment]

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

[*The Celebrant/Presider beckons community prayer by saying*]

Celebrant: Let us pray together.
O God, Source of all life, we ask your prayers for *N.* and *N.*, that they may be filled with God's blessing and grow in love for each other with unashamed faithfulness throughout their life together.

People: *O God, hear our prayer.*

Celebrant: May *N.* and *N.* have the courage to recognize and forgive each other's faults, bearing each other's burdens and exemplifying for us forgiveness and reconciliation. May their life together be a sign of God's faithful love for the world.

People: *O God, hear our prayer.*

Celebrant: We ask your prayers for the earth and all of God's creation, that we may nourish it in Your name,

People: *O God, hear our prayer.*

Celebrant: We ask your prayers for the welfare of the world, for peace and respect among nations, for all the leaders of the world and all men and women and children everywhere,

People: *O God, hear our prayer.*

Celebrant: We pray for justice in our own land, in our society, in our homes; for the sick and the poor, the destitute, the unemployed, the lonely, the bereaved, those suffering from addictions, and all victims of hatred and intolerance,

People: *O God, hear our prayer.*

Celebrant: We pray from the yearnings of our hearts, from those concerns and thanksgivings which we now present before God:

[The people are invited to pray aloud or silently those concerns or thanksgivings they wish to offer]

Celebrant: 0 God, Ruler of all, you made us in your image and likeness and bestowed upon us everlasting life. You commanded your apostles to be united by the law of love. Hear the prayers of your people and grant to *N.* and *N.* grace to love each other in joy all the days of their lives. For you are a compassionate God and a lover of human beings and all of Creation, and we glorify you, the Source of all, the Word of Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit, one God in glory everlasting. Amen.

People: Amen.

THE COMMUNITY BLESSING

Celebrant: Blessed are You, Our God, for you have brought together the hearts and souls of *N.* and *N.*, in our witness.
Give holy spirit, we pray, to each and both of them.
Make their life together a sign of trust, a blessing upon the whole world.
N. and *N.*, may the Christ live in your hearts as your blessing. May you flourish together, and rejoice in your cherished friends and family members.
May God grant you the good that endures, and bring you to everlasting joy.
Father God/Mother God will surely bless you as were blessed Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, Joseph and Mary, Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, and all the saints, both ancient and

present who have offered themselves
wholeheartedly one to the other.

Go in peace, then, to your new home, knowing
that you are members of a new covenant, and
blessed by this sacred congregation here present.
Be strong and of good courage. Reach out to
each other in all sorts of embarrassing and
encompassing ways, so that you may touch and
grow together.

Say to each other often those words and blessing
which we now say to one another in this
gathering:

“The Peace of God be always with you!”

People: *And also with you!*

*[All those present greet and bless one another in joy
and celebration; if there is to be a Communion, it
continues here.]*

[Music may be included here.]

*be of love
a little
more careful
than of
everything*

e e cummings

✠

A LITURGY FOR THE
SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT
OF
GODPARENTING

Although it has certainly been a practice in many traditions to appoint and acknowledge Godparents within the rite of infant or child baptism, we have found that in today's world there are situations in which a young person has already been baptized, but who has no Godparents...yet wishes to forge such a spiritual relationship with one or more adults. Such a decision can be made in mutual dialogue of children, parents, and friends, to ascertain whether this joyous rite is appropriate to the child. The rite is included in the Eucharist, following the Prayers of the People:

Celebrant: Dear Companions in Christ: it is a sacred, solemn, and joyous occasion whenever pilgrims of a Christ Community wish to offer themselves in mutual commitment of heart and soul, one to another. Such a ritual is that of spiritual Godparents and Godchildren, in which each offers the bond of love, solidarity, and mutual sharing on the common journey through life. It is a hope of reciprocal teaching and learning, talking and listening, declaring and exchanging... but, mainly, it is a sacred promise to be truthfully and openly and morally involved, on whatever responsible level, one with another. And so, in the presence of this Christ Community, these

pilgrims come now to formally declare their desire to live such a holy relationship.

[to the child]

Please state your name to this Community. (N.), being of an age at which you can answer for yourself in sincerity and acceptance, do you declare that you wish to accept (N. and N.) as your spiritual Godparents?

Child: I do, in the grace of God.

[to the Godparents]

Celebrant: (N. and N.) in the witness of this gathered Christ community, do you declare that you wish to accept (N.) as your spiritual Godchild?

Godparents: We do, in the grace of God.

Celebrant: Do you understand the responsibility of this act, the commitment to this child, the sacred relationship which you are here and now establishing? Are you prepared to offer yourselves as mentors, guides, and servant-leaders in the free exchange of both mind and soul?

Godparents: We gladly and joyfully accept this bond and relationship in Christ.

[to the Community]

Celebrant: Will all of you witnessing these declarations do all in your power to support and encourage these Companions in Christ in their new and sacred relationship?

ALL: [Loudly] We will!

Celebrant: It is therefore in joy and celebration that we acknowledge and bless these statements of mutual commitment...

[The sign of the Cross is made on the forehead of the Godparents and Godchild]

And now we witness the sacred covenant
between God and all of us as children, that
covenant which unites us as brothers and sisters,
as we declare in gratitude and glory:
The Peace of God be always with you!

People:

And also with you!

[All those present greet and bless one another]




A LITURGY
FOR THE SACRAMENT OF
RECONCILIATION
BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE

In common consent, two people may come together to join in prayer, to communicate with God and each other, and to acknowledge the Holy Presence in their relationship. This sacred act is done in the privacy of the two pilgrims, or—if they wish it so—in the company of their spiritual community. The liturgy begins with a minute of centering silence, after which one of them begins, with the other offering the responses:

- Companion: O God, our Creator, Sustainer, and Counselor,
Response: We ask You to help us fill this void between us.
- Companion: We seek Your wisdom so that we may be wise in our relationship.
Response: We seek Your assistance in finding our self in the other.
- Companion: We know that we are both children of God,
Response: equally loved, equally gifted, equally human.
- Companion: We know deep within us that the Christ lives in our hearts and souls;
Response: we seek ways of seeing and knowing the Christ in the other.
- Companion: We come to you and to each other with certain fears and uncertainties from our past,
Response: with memories of previous hurts and pain and struggles with other people in our past.
- Companion: We ask You, then, to help us stay in the present

moment, to forgive ourselves of limitations or failings or disappointments in our personal histories,

Response: so that we may hear our mutual struggles, that we may hear Your healing words between us.

Companion: We ask You to help each of us to be humble and honest, to offer empathy and compassion,

Response: to share the many similarities among us, rather than the few differences between us.

Companion: Allow us to know that our minor separations may disappear into the bond of true friendship.

Response: Allow us to remember the shortness of life on this earth, and how important it is to trust and love others, as well as ourselves;

Companion: Allow each of us to search our memories, our hearts, and our souls to bring forth those gifts to share with the other,

Response: those experiences, those learnings, those discoveries about ourselves which need to be forgiven or forgotten,

Companion: as well as those discoveries which may bring us into closer companionship with each other,

Response: and to share those times of laughter, tears, struggle, and joy.

Companion: We both make mistakes and fail in some things, O God,

Response: and so You taught us to forgive, to heal, to continue to grow.

[Each pilgrim places a hand on the shoulder of the other]

Companion: We thank You, God, for your Presence among us,

Response: for reminding us that we have many gifts to offer the other,

Companion: that we have much to learn from the other,

Response: that we are called to nurture each other,

Companion: that we are a real and a spiritual part of each other,

Response: just as we are members of Your new family of grace.

Companion: In Your Spirit of forgiveness,

Response: in Your Spirit of new beginnings,

Companion: in Your Spirit of embracing us just as we are,

Response: we now embrace each other as we are...

[After embracing, each of the pilgrims takes turns in blessing the other, by putting a hand on the forehead of the other and saying]

“I bless you in your life;

I bless you in your sacredness;

I bless you with my heart and soul. Amen.”

[If possible, the two pilgrims agree on a time in the next twenty-four hours when they might spend at least a half-hour together in sharing some of their own memories and experiences, each having equal time to speak and listen]





**PRAYERS
OF
BLESSING AND HEALING**

A Prayer of Gratitude

Our Creator and Sustainer, we offer deepest thanks for the Grace which You offer us as we strive to serve others. We give thanks that You protect us from superiority or false-humility, from unrealistic expectations or unrighteous judgment. We are thankful that You give us the sight to see Your Presence in all those we serve, so that we are able to acknowledge the Christ in ourselves. We thank You for our ability to express joy and grief and compassion in Your Name, even as we allow others to do likewise. Thanks for all that has been, for all that is, for all that will be, in Your present and future Domain. Amen.

A Prayer of Commitment

O Divine Companion, who knows every part of our hearts and minds and souls, we ask that You fill us with sacred sincerity as we offer our work and service to others. Allow us to understand the Grace-full commitment of living in the simplicity of the Gospel. May our ministry—full of talents and gifts and stumblings and errors—be a statement and a sacrament of Your Presence in our life and being, so that we have love and forgiveness for others as well as for ourselves. Amen.

Prayers to bless meals

We pause now, O Loving Creator, to accept the gift of the bounty of Your Creation. May we remember to share our food and our lives, as we remember those who also seek such nourishment. May we share our love and conversation, as we

remember those who are alone. May we sustain our health, as we remember those who are ill. May we allow Your Love and Peace to be at this table, as we remember our brothers and sisters who have no table or food. For all things, let us be thankful for Your Grace, as we say together, Amen.

or

O Creator and Giver of all good gifts, we are nourished daily by Your Spirit, by companionship and love, even as we feast on understanding and forgiveness. As we share this meal, allow us to share our lives with words and laughter and listening, remembering your acts of foot-washing and humility. We pause now to be mindful of Your continuous Presence in those around us, offering unending thanks for the blessings we receive, not only in our lives, but also in this food. In that gratitude, we say together, Amen.

A Prayer before a gathering

Our Eternal Counselor and Comforter, allow us to be aware of Your Presence at this gathering. Gift us with the spirit of true listening, of humor and humility, of genuine words and expression, so that each may be as a sacrament of this communion together. May this dialogue, along with all the actions of our lives, evidence the Presence of Your Domain in our midst. In thanks for those blessings in our lives, we say, Amen.

A Prayer before visiting someone who is ill

O Divine Healer, fill our entire being with compassion and strength, so that we may carry Your Blessings to our brothers and sisters. May we heal by our presence in Your Name. May our presence remind our friend of the love and caring of our community. Guide us, we pray, so that what we say and do abounds with honesty, sanctity, and hope, even as we accept whatever gifts are offered to us in return. Remind us, O Blessed

Teacher, that even as we minister, so are we ministered unto. In the hope of healing for others and ourselves, we say, Amen.

A Prayer for a Companion who is ill

O Divine Healer, we offer these prayers for our Companion (*name*) who struggles with the dis-ease of bodily weakness. We pause together to pray for (*his/her*) needs, for courage to face such struggles, for remembrance of the community which loves and supports (*him/her*). We ask You to surround this place with the Light of your healing touch, with the ever-present Spirit of Your concern, with the medicine of Your unending Love. May our companion know peace and serenity even in the midst of this struggle, as (*he/she*) knows that we, too, continue to love and care. As we pray for healing and health, we ask especially for the sense of the Sacred in this day and for evermore. And we say, in humility and trust, Amen.

A Laying-on-of-Hands for one who is ill

O Source of all Gifts, we ask for the special gift of health and wholeness for our Companion (*name*). As we trust fully in the Divine Power of Your Grace, we ask that the sacred powers of healing be called forth in Your Name, as we know that true healing is finally a greater awareness of Your Presence.

(To the ill person:)

With abounding hope and faith, we now place our hands upon you, calling forth the healing medicine of God's Grace. And we make the sign of the Cross upon you, as a sure and certain signature of the Presence of God in your body and your life. From this act, from this trust, may you know that Presence that lifts all burdens and offers all hope, this day and forevermore. Amen.

✠

A LITANY FOR A COMPANION NEAR DEATH

If possible, it is desirable that the Litany be said by the congregated family, friends, and community members of the ill person; the Litany is read responsively:

- Companion: O God, our Creator and Eternal Parent,
People: have mercy on us and especially on Your servant, (name).
- Companion: O God the Son, bearer of our tribulations and pain,
People: have mercy on us and especially on Your servant, (name).
- Companion: O God, Holy Spirit, Companion in our lives,
People: have mercy on us and especially on Your servant, (name).
- Companion: O God, Source of all that is and will be,
People: hear our personal and community plea.
- Companion: From all threat, from all fear, from all uncertainty and anguish,
People: deliver all of us and especially (name).
- Companion: By Your Infinite compassion,
People: O God, deliver us and especially (name).
- Companion: Even as we struggle with the fear and frustration of our limitations in science and human healing, we know that You will continue to comfort and protect and transform Your dear one, (name);
People: for Your Presence is eternal, O God;
- Companion: that You continue to forgive us and our

Companion (*name*) of any separation of spirit and will which may distance us from You;

People: *for we know that You forgive us, O God.*

Companion: that You continue to beckon us and (*name*) to that place of refreshment and everlasting blessings;

People: *for we know that You bless us, O God.*

Companion: that You continue to inspire (*name*) and all of us with joy and gladness in Your eternal Dominion, with all Your saints in Light;

People: *for we know that You bestow Eternal Life, O God.*

Companion: With grateful remembrance, and in the light of Grace, we say together:
*Our Creator in heaven,
 Holy is Your Name;
 Your reign has come,
 Your will be done
 on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.
 Strengthen us in the time of trial,
 and deliver us from evil.
 For the Dominion,
 the Power,
 and the Glory are Yours,
 now and forever. ✠
 Amen.*

Companion: Deliver Your servant, (*name*), O Christ, from all impediments and bonds, that (*he/she*) may rest with all your saints in Your eternal Home.

People: *Receive (him/her), O Christ, into that joyous place with You.*

Companion: Allow us to be continually thankful, O Christ, for the Grace which connects each of us to Your servant, (*name*),

People: *for through (him/her) we have known gifts of Your Grace.*

Companion: Thanks be to God.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

Companion: Let us continue to know and speak (*his/her*) name with gladness and joy;

People: *to remember and praise this life among us, O Christ.*

Companion: Receive (*him/her*) into Your caring arms, O Christ,

People: *as a sheep of Your own flock,*

Companion: as a servant of Your own Word,

People: *as a child of Your own Creation.*

Companion: And, as always, be with us, too, O Christ,

People: *as we struggle through this vigil with our Companion and friend.*

Companion: Give us strength, O Christ.

People: *Give us strength, O Christ.*

Companion: Give us courage, O Christ.

People: *Give us courage, O Christ.*

Companion: Give us hope, O Christ.

People: *Give us hope, O Christ.*

Companion: As we say with one voice:

ALL: *Amen.*





PRAYERS OF MOURNING, REMEMBRANCE, AND GRATITUDE

A Commendation at the time of death

Depart, o blessed soul, from this world, now free of all limiting bonds, of all suffering and pain, of all needless struggles. Depart in the Name of the Eternal Parent who created you, of the Son who accompanies you, of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you.

Depart, our Companion and friend, knowing that our prayers and love go with you. We offer our prayers of gratitude for the gifts of Grace which you offered us. May you rest in divine peace, and may your dwelling place be in the promised Paradise.

[As a sign of the Cross is made on the forehead, hand, and foot of the deceased:]

Into Your arms, O Merciful God, we commend Your servant, (*name*). Accept (*him/her*), we pray, into that eternal place which is the limitless love of Your Heart and the endless caring of Your holy Parenthood. In the Name of our Blessed Creator, we say together, Amen.

A Prayer for those who mourn

O Blessed One, Healer of hearts and souls, we ask for Your Presence of light and comfort as we mourn the earthly loss of (*name*). Allow us the courage to face directly the tremendous sense of loss we feel at this time, as we try to imagine our community without (*him/her*). Knowing that You have offered a place of rest and eternal peace to all who have passed to Your Dominion, let us offer our own peace and love to one another as

we struggle through this difficult time. Let us be open and sharing with all of our God-given emotions, trusting that You will offer Grace to us as we feel this grief. Allow us remember that Your Presence is in those around us, so that we shall not be hesitant to touch and connect. For the life which has brought us Grace—and for the community we continue now together—we offer endless thanks to You and Your comforting Spirit, as we say together, Amen.

A Prayer of Remembrance

O Eternal Spirit, the Keeper of the Book of Life, hear both our pain and our joy as we remember the life and spirit of (*name*). Allow us to celebrate the moments of life which we shared; allow us to forgive ourselves, as You forgive us, for the frailties we may have shown in this dear relationship; allow us to see that there are others in our life, too, who give us grace and love. We pray that You will keep our friend and Companion with you into eternity, in the peacefulness of Your Dominion, so that the remembrance of such a gift in our life will never be forgotten. In gratitude and grace, we say together, Amen.



✠
A
FUNERAL LITURGY

GATHERING

*We gather in respectful quietness...
and a bell is rung to mark our presence together
[A song may be offered]*

GREETING

- Celebrant: Blessings and greetings, as we come together to remember and celebrate a life which brought us special gifts.
- People: We are thankful for this time together.*
- Celebrant: We grieve together, yet know that—beckoned or unbeckoned—the Presence of God *is* present among us.
- People: We open our eyes and our ears, our hearts and our souls to the Presence of the Christ within us and within all people.*
- Celebrant: We come here, O God, seeking to re-animate the experiences we have had with *N.*,
- People: knowing that we remain members one of another.*
- Celebrant: We gather also to rehearse the names and the lives of brothers and sisters, ancestors and mentors, who, along with *N.*, have given us life and learnings, teachings and wisdom, who have offered us community;
- People: those in our past and present who offer us courage and solidarity and community;*
- Celebrant: the names and the journeys of those whom we

People: must never forget, and especially N.,
*even as we forgive them and ourselves for any
shortcomings of thought or deed.*

Celebrant: Allow us quiet and open hearts, O God, as we
now silently remember why we are called to this
sacred assembly,

People: *As we silently search our hearts and souls for
that which re-members us, one to another...*

[A time of quietness is observed]

Celebrant: We offer great thanks, praise, and gratitude, O
God, for the grace which allows us to be together
once again!

People: *We are grateful, O God, for the Grace which
continues to include N. among us, now and
forever.*

Celebrant: Amen.

People: *So be it. Amen.*

Celebrant: Dearly Beloved, I call you now to this Meal of
remembrance and thankfulness; let us now
present ourselves as Children of God, as we
listen to words of teachers and fellow-pilgrims in
the Domain of God.

People: *We open ourselves—mind, body, and soul—to
gifts that are offered to us.*

READINGS

[Selections of ancient and/or contemporary wisdom
may be offered by Companions]

[A song may be offered after the readings]

THE GOSPEL

[The people are asked to stand, and a bell is rung before
the appointed Gospel is announced by the Celebrant or
someone appointed:]

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of the Christ according to

_____.
[*The reader concludes the reading by saying:*]

Celebrant: The Gospel of the Christ.

People: *Thanks be to the Christ for Living Truth.*

SERMON/HOMILY

[*The Celebrant or other Companion reflects upon the Gospel*]

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

[*A Companion is asked to beckon the Community to open prayer, inviting petitions, prayers, hopes, and thanksgivings*]

Companion: Let us pray from our hearts and souls.

People: *Let us offer petition and thanksgiving.*

Companion: As we perceive the Presence of God in our midst, we are called to be especially mindful of:

The Creation in all its wholeness...

The Family of all peoples in all places...

Our own families, both of origin and choice...

Our friends and neighbors...

Those who are close but far away...

Those who are far away but close...

Those whom we have trouble loving, including ourselves...

Those whom we have called enemies...

Those who are in daily need...

Those who suffer in body or spirit...

Our ancestors, both ancient and recent...

Those who have been recently born...or died...

and especially for *N.*;

Those who are seeking rebirth...

Those who hold public trust in all places...

Those who are in a state of change or sorrow...and especially for those who grieve *N.*'s death;

Those who have a special need...

[The people offer their petitions and concerns, either vocally or silently]

And we celebrate the many blessings and joys of this life, giving heartfelt thanks for abundant Grace, especially for the life of N.:

[The people offer their thanksgivings, either vocally or silently]

Companion: Let us pray the prayer that comes from the heart of God,

People: *the prayer that offers the resolve of our souls:*
(ALL) *Our Creator in heaven,*

Holy is Your Name;

Your reign has come,

Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Strengthen us in the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For the Dominion,

the Power,

and the Glory are Yours,

now and forever.

Amen. ✠

Celebrant: Thank You, God, for the abundance of Your love and acceptance for all of Your children, and especially N.,

People: *that we may grieve into wholeness.*

Celebrant: Give us, we pray, strength in our remembering,

People: *courage in our forgiveness,*

Celebrant: joy in our being forgiven,

People: *passion in our celebration of N.'s life,*

Celebrant: gratitude in our blessings,

People: memory in our learnings,
Celebrant: nurture in our continuing relationships,
People: peace in our hearts...
Celebrant: for of such is the very Christ within us,
People: for of such is the very Christ in others.
Celebrant: Remembering the Gift of You in our souls,
People: we are now able to say, with joy and thanks:
Celebrant: The Peace of God be always with you!
People: And also with you!

[All those present greet and bless
one another in joy and thanksgiving]

[A song is sung or a bell is rung, as the liturgy continues]

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant: Come, let us remember at this Table of passion
and New Life!
People: Let us remember as the Body of Christ!
Celebrant: May we be flooded—in heart and soul—by the
name and images of N.,
People: knowing that the name and spirit is alive among
us.
Celebrant: May we be thankful for the very Creation which
remembers us daily in its gifts;
People: that we may nurture it as it nurtures us.
Celebrant: May we be witnesses to peace and humility;
People: that we may extol Your Presence within us.
Celebrant: May we set aside our fears;
People: that we may discover Your Presence in others.
Celebrant: May we gain strength from this holy food;
People: that we may use our energy in sacred action.
Celebrant: May we see around us the saints in our lives, and
especially N.;
People: that we may understand our common journey.
Celebrant: May we learn the music of holy fools;
People: that we may dance at the altar of God.

Celebrant: May we order our lives in holy poverty;
People: *that we may offer our abundance to others.*

Celebrant: May we remember with our child-nature;
People: *that we may be true adults in our servanthood.*

Celebrant: May we exclude no one from Your Table;
People: *that we not shun You in others.*

Celebrant: May we remember *N.* and all of those who
 have offered us what we needed for learning and
 growth, for love and life;
People: *lest we forget who joins us for this feast.*

Celebrant: And may we always sing, with all of Creation,
 our hymn of memory and reconciliation:

ALL: *Holy, Holy, Holy One,*
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 Spirit of
God.
Hosanna in the highest! ✠

THE CONSECRATION

Celebrant: The story of our Teacher's last meal of
 remembrance is filled with the memory of our
 own lives,
People: *of friends and companions gathering in the midst*
of both love and grief,

Celebrant: to celebrate what they had had, and what they
 hoped for;
People: *even in fear and confusion and uncertainty*

Celebrant: they gathered again to remember their life
 together;
People: *women, children, and men seeking community*

Celebrant: sought that connecting spirit of God within them,
People: *knowing that such a meal might sustain them.*

Celebrant: In the midst of the memories and thanksgivings,
People: *he reminded them—and us—of how we can be eternally members of one another in both memory and spirit:*

[A bell is rung]

Celebrant: For he took the common bread of the table, broke it, blessed it with holy spirit, and said for eternity, “Take this, my beloved ones, and eat it,

People: *for this is the nourishment for our remembrance.”*

[A bell is rung]

Celebrant: And he took the common cup of the feast, blessed it with holy spirit, and offered it to all saying, “Drink from this deeply,

People: *for this is from the heart of God within you; this will quench our thirst for remembrance.”*

Celebrant: And the people—the *havurah* of a life together—were remembered forever,

People: *just as we may be rekindled in our passion for wholeness.*

Celebrant: For the Grace of this Holy Act make us one body, one spirit in the Christ, that we may worthily serve all of Creation in God’s Name.
Amen. ✠

People: *Amen.*

[The Bread is broken]

Celebrant: Rejoice! The Grace of New Life is given to us!

People: *Alleluia! We are Companions forever!*
Alleluia!

THE INVITATION TO AND SHARING OF THE HOLY MEAL

Celebrant: Gifts of God for the children of God.
Take them in remembrance that the Christ does live within you, and that you are to share that

Christness with all of Creation, all the days of
your life. Amen.

People: Amen.

*[The Elements are shared among the Community... and
ALL people who seek the Christ within them are invited
to receive the Eucharist]*

*[The Celebrant receives communion personally and for
all those who are not physically present—especially N.—and
says]*

Celebrant: Amen.

People: Amen. So be it. Amen

THE COMMISSION

[The Celebrant asks a Companion to lead the recitation]

Companion: As we prepare to carry our lives and ministry to
our brothers and sisters, in humility and
commitment, we remember the commission from
St. Francis:

O Christ, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred,

People: let us sow love.

Companion: Where there is injury,

People: let us offer pardon.

Companion: Where there is discord,

People: let us seek union.

Companion: Where there is doubt,

People: let us acknowledge faith.

Companion: Where there is despair,

People: let us offer hope.

Companion: Where there is darkness,

People: let us shed light.

Companion: Where there is sadness,

People: let us enliven joy.

Companion: Allow us to console; allow us to understand,
allow us the Grace to love,

People: for it is in giving that we receive;
Companion: it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
People: and it is in dying that we are born to New Life!
Amen.

[A song or other music may be offered]

THE COMMUNITY BLESSING

Celebrant: Let us go forth into the world in peace;
People: Let us be of good courage, remembering all the saints around us...and especially N.;

Celebrant: Let us discern and hold fast to that which is good;
People: Let us render to no one, including ourselves, evil for evil;

Celebrant: Let us strengthen the grief-hearted, within us and around us, especially those who grieve N.;

People: Let us support the struggling, even as we honor our own struggles;

Celebrant: Let us help the affliction in our hearts, and in the hearts of others;
People: Let us honor all people;

Celebrant: Let us love and serve God;
People: For we—and all people—are blessed with the Presence of God;

Celebrant: For we—and all people—are blessed with the Companionship of the Christ within us;
People: For we—and all people—are blessed with holy Spirit;

Celebrant: The meal is ended; let us go forth, in our healing and our celebration of the life of N.!

People: Amen! So be it! Amen!

[A song or other music may be offered]

[If there is to be a burial, the people proceed to the grave for the committal; prayers are offered, and the Celebrant offers these words:]

THE COMMITAL

Celebrant:

I am the resurrection and the life, says God;
they that believe in me, though they were dead, yet shall they
live;

and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;
and though this body be destroyed, yet shall I see God;
whom I shall see for myself and my eyes shall behold,
and not as a stranger.

For none of us lives to themselves,
and no person dies to themselves.

For if we live, we live in God.

and if we die, we die in God.

Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are God's own.

Blessed are the dead who die in God;
even so says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.

In the love of the Christ within us;
in the spirit of the love both given and received in *N.*'s life;
in the gratitude for this life which was gifted to us;
we commend this body to the elements: earth to earth, ashes to
ashes, dust to dust, knowing that God will comfort *N.*'s soul
forever and ever.

Amen.





A LITURGY FOR THE BLESSING OF A HOME

The blessing of a home is a good and lovely act, reminding us that house churches were the original norm of Jesus' ministry and disciples. It is fitting—although certainly not a requirement of the rite—to name the home after a saint, either ancient or contemporary: a soul who has modeled the spirit of the Christ.

[The congregation gathers outside the door of the house in quietness; the house is named; the patron-saint is described; and the Celebrant continues]

Celebrant: O Father God, Mother God, our Eternal Parent and Blessing: Your home is in every particle of the universe which You have created, which we cannot even imagine;

People: allow us, then, to know Your Presence in this place, as we bless this house in Your Spirit.

Celebrant: Encompass and inspirit this habitation with the power of Your Grace so that nothing of harm might dare invade;

People: by the love which is Your heart, may this blessing protect from every calamity those who shall live and work within these walls.

[A Cross is traced on the front door, and blessed water is sprinkled on the house and grounds]

Celebrant: We bless this entrance daily by the spirit which lingers within it;

People: we bless it daily by our comings and goings in

kindness and mutual respect, signs of God's mercy to each and all.

Resident: May we greet each pilgrim at our door as the Christ!

Celebrant: May all the rooms herein be places of holiness;

People: *may all the rooms be filled with joy!*

Celebrant: May all herein be forever vigilant of negative forces,

People: *to banish them whenever recognized.*

Celebrant: Thank God for this sacred place!

Resident: For here we may entertain angels and saints unaware.

[A candle is lighted, and the candle-bearer (a resident) leads the procession into the main living area]

Celebrant: Blessed be this place!

People: *May it echo with laughter and wisdom and peace.*

A Guest: Listen to the words of St. Luke:
“Be compassionate as your God is compassionate. Do not judge, and you yourselves will not be judged; do not condemn, and you yourselves will not be condemned; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give and there will be gifts for you...because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.”

Celebrant: How good and righteous and helpful it is when people strive to live in unity and love,

People: *for love, offered openly, heals many frailties.*

Celebrant: You have birthed us, O God, to grow and thrive most in the company of committed companions;

People: *bless all who live and work and share in this place.*

[The Celebrant address the adult householders]

- Celebrant: Will you strive individually—and work together—to make this a safe and sane and sacred habitation for yourselves and all who enter herein?
- Residents: Yes, in the Grace of the Christ who offers us the gifts of companions, we certainly will.
- Celebrant: Will you offer nurture, patience, heart, and soul to any children who may be in your guidance and safe-keeping?
- Residents: Yes, in the Grace of the Christ who offers us patience and courage, we certainly will.
- Celebrant: Will each and all of you—their companions, friends, and community—offer them your support and encouragement?
- People*: *Yes, in all ways that we may discern. May God be here with you forever.*
- [The Celebrant and the candle-bearer lead the procession into the kitchen]*
- Celebrant: We bless this room, that you may never suffer from lack of bread or sacred sustenance;
- People*: *may all your meals be spiced with mutual awareness and nourishment.*
- [The procession moves back to the common living area]*
- Celebrant: I ask all of you to kindly wait here in silence, offering your own prayers of blessing and hope upon this home, as the householders and I bless the remaining rooms in God’s name.
- People*: *That is our honor and our joy.*
- [Each room is then blessed]*
- [At a bedroom:]*
- Celebrant: We bless this as a space of peaceful sleeping and waking, a place of rest and relaxation, a place of healing and refreshment.
- Residents: May we always know God’s presence.

[*At a bathroom:*]

Celebrant: We bless this as a place of cleansing, of healing,
of health and refreshment.

Residents: Even as we learn again to love and respect our
lives and our bodies.

[*At an office, study or workshop:*]

Celebrant: We bless this as a place of balance, of inquiry, of
creativity, and skill.

Residents: As we dedicate our work, knowledge, and
awareness to the building of the Domain of God.

[*The procession returns to the congregated community*]

Celebrant: Bless all who live in or visit this home.

Residents: May the friend or stranger be always welcomed
as the Christ.

People: *May we always show thankfulness for the gifts
and blessings which we receive as guests in this
place.*

Celebrant: And now, as a sign of our solidarity and
benediction for each other and this place, let us
make the first meal of this blessed home the meal
of *havurah*, of mutual commitment, of life
together.

People: *For by such do we awaken to the Presence of
God.*

Celebrant: May the Peace of God be always with you.

People: *And also with you!*

[*All those present greet and bless one another*]

[*A bell is rung*]

Celebrant: And now we receive teaching, forgiveness, and a
reminder of our place in God's heart, as we pray
together:

ALL: *Our Creator in heaven,
Holy is Your Name;
Your reign has come,*

*Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Strengthen us in the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the Dominion,
the Power,
and the Glory are Yours,
now and forever.
Amen. ✠*

[A bell is rung]

Celebrant: In such a company of friends, Jesus took bread, blessed it and shared it, saying, “By this sacrament we become the Body of Christ.”

[The bread is shared in silence]

[A bell is rung]

And then he blessed the common cup, saying, “If you drink of this, you will drink of the New Life which I offer you.”

[The cup is shared in silence]

Celebrant: We are truly blessed!

People: *Our lives, our habitations, our havurah.*

Celebrant: Go then—and return again—in the peace and the Grace of God. Amen.

People: *Thanks be to God! Amen! So be it! Amen!*

AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wreck like me!
I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to hear, and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

Our God has promised good to me, God's word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

[adapted from John Newton, 1725-1807]

LEARNINGS

- We have learned that our greatest gifts are our greatest burdens...that our greatest burdens are our greatest gifts.
- We have learned that we are called to learn from each other, that in common struggle and discovery we are each other's teachers and students. Life gives us, through the Grace of God, common and mutual lessons, even if we are at various stages of perceiving, hearing, seeing, feeling.
- We have learned, through Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and others—and through many of our own life experiences—that the stages of “change” or “loss” or “death” tend to follow a very predictable pattern:
 - Denial
 - Anger
 - Bargaining
 - Depression
 - Acceptance
 - (Hope)

We know, too, that this process of “grieving” is often a matter of working through the different stages at different times, often without logic or apparent sense, but knowing that certain stages will have to be “visited” several times. We also know that there is not a “schedule” for grieving...that each person has a different time period to travel the process...and that what is “right” for one person is often very different for another. And we know that we must be patient and gentle and accepting with ourselves during our own grieving process...and, hopefully, accepting of others who are experiencing their own loss.

- We have learned that “burnout” in Servant work often comes as a result of our own inappropriate expectations of others. We know that it is easy to become frustrated and angry when someone does not “meet our expectations” of behavior and/or attitude, especially when we have not openly looked at

our own unstated or unacknowledged expectations. Such self-discovery can offer an oasis of refreshment to each of us.

- We have learned that Servants are not called upon to change, rescue, take care of, fix, heal, or convert other adult people, for such seemingly-helpful acts are often simply ploys of control; instead, we are called to act on our own lives, seeking companionship in our own struggles.
- We have learned that when we wish to “change” or “attack” another person, we are likely getting in touch with our *own*, personal “shadow,” that part of us which is often hidden, remote, and scary to us.
- We know that we are called upon to “be” with others, listening to their stories, acknowledging our connectedness, and offering feedback if they seek it.
- We have learned that growth and learning comes mainly through the process of *inclusion*, rather than exclusion. The more we can learn to live in community with a *diversity* of fellow-pilgrims, the more likely we are to confront and dissipate our own “demons.”
- We have learned from such stories as the “deaf man” and the “blind man” in the Gospels that the healing process can seem and feel very “messy” sometimes. We know that an openness to healing—from wherever and however it may come—will often allow us the health that we seek.
- We have learned that our chances for growth and healing are substantially increased when we ask for what we want, rather than relying on power-plays, seduction, negative manipulation, divisive gossip, or other energy-draining and self-demeaning ploys for control. We know, as adults, that
 - we may not *always* get what we want
 - that a “no” does not necessarily mean “no forever”
 - that a “yes” does not necessarily mean “yes forever”

- that another person’s response might allow us to perceive what we *really* wanted.
- We have learned that much of what is worthy and joyful and meaningful in life comes from the daily repetition of tasks, from “sticking with it” (or as the Buddhists would say, from “carrying water and chopping wood”), rather than from a constant search for excitement or control or newness. We know that facing repetition and daily tasks may bring the *fear* of boredom, anger, depression, anxiety...but that we may learn, through personal discipline, to live into joy, delight, commitment, and fulfillment.
- We have learned that “mind” and “body” are not separate entities, but truly of the same spirit. And so we know that rituals of
 - honest work
 - spiritual reflection
 - intellectual stimulation
 - physical exercise
 - kindly diet
 - mutual relationships
 - times for play

are activities which bring us health and peace.

- We have learned that “happiness” is a matter of occasional delight which comes to us by circumstance or fate, whereas “**joy**” is created within us by the ways we live, believe, and treat ourselves and others.
- We have learned that the 12-Step program of recovery from addictions has brought health and healing to millions of brothers and sisters; this paradigm of daily living is based upon the following spiritual Steps:
 1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions, that our lives had become unmanageable.
 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicted persons, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

- We have learned that the basic essence and the transforming message of the Christ is centered in *forgiveness, inclusion, compassion, and healing*.
- We have learned that we strive to be a Community of *progressive* Christians, by which we mean:
We have found a beckoning to God and God's realm through the words, acts, and life of Jesus of Nazareth, our Teacher; we honor, too, the faithfulness of people who have their own sacred names for the journey to God's realm, acknowledging that their ways are true for them, as our ways are true for us...

We understand that our sharing of bread and cup in the name and spirit of Jesus is an ancient, continuing act of God's feast for *all* peoples... We take seriously and joyously Jesus' promise that the Christ lives within us and within all people; we believe that the presence of God is offered in any given moment, and we attempt to discern, individually and together, the vocation to which we are called, doing the best we can... We seek to learn from--rather than to worship--the wisdom writings of our ancestors and contemporaries... We claim no special powers or authority as "professionals" and/or "experts" in this ministry and work; as volunteers--without salaries--our incentive is the mutual learning and encouragement of community, and that is enough... We welcome all sorts and conditions of people to join in our liturgy and in our shared life as Companions, including, but not limited to: committed pilgrims and questioning skeptics, heterosexuals and homosexuals, females and males, those of all races and cultures, those of all classes and differing talents, as well as the wounded, the outcast, the despairing, and the hopeful--without imposing on any of them the necessity of becoming anything other than their sacred, true selves... We believe that the way we treat all people--and ourselves--is the honest and vital way that we declare our beliefs... We find more grace in the spiritual journey of understanding and acceptance than in predetermined destinations... **We perceive that work and ministry which involve the sharing of hospitality, shelter, food, clothing, spiritual intimacy, healing, mutual learnings, and the special needs of children are at the very heart of life...** We recognize that our journey together entails costly discipleship: mutual forgiveness, joyful solidarity, responsive and responsible behaviors, servant-leadership, conscientious resistance to evil, and renunciation of privilege, as has always been the tradition and the risk of followers of Jesus.

Addendum: Notes on the Rite of Holy Union

- This rite is freely offered to be used by the uniting-couple and their community in any way that seems helpful to their sacred act of commitment, whether it be a marriage and/or a rite of commitment by same-sex couples; it is not our intent to promote a particular denomination of the Church.
- This rite is set in the context of a communion service; if communion is not to be included, the rite can stand by itself.
- If communion is included, it would follow after this rite.
- The term “Celebrant” refers to that person who would preside at a ceremony involving communion; the term “Presider” is used otherwise herein.
- *N.* refers to a person’s specific name, which must be inserted.
- There are, of course, almost endless variations of commitment vows—many available if you search the internet—and, certainly, many couples opt to write their own vows.
- You are encouraged to include plenty of music in the rite, except when its placement would interrupt the flow of various sections.
- If you would like to see various rites of communion—into which this commitment rite might be included—please see our various liturgies on the Liturgies button at www.orderofchristianworkers.org

We hope that your ceremony—and your life together—will be one of conciliation, joy, and celebration!

Blessings,

The Order of Christian Workers

Additional Notes

A possible addition to the opening greeting:

We gather here as friends, even though some of us may seem as strangers to one another. Yet we remember the words of the Irish rune: “The Christ comes to us often in the stranger’s guise.”

Therefore, we come to this sacred place to sing, to pray, and to witness in this grace-full moment...a moment abounding in what the monk Thomas Merton called “an explosion of hope.”

We gather into our presence here both those seen and unseen—ancestors, grandparents, parents, friends with whom we have lived and shared so much who now rest with God, and those who sit in vigil and celebration in other places at this very moment...

We are reminded that the Domain of God is in every moment of our lives, if we will only see it, feel it, and celebrate it.

It is in our diversity that we proclaim Community, for it is in our black, white, brown, red, young, old, gay, straight, wealthy, poor, struggling, recovering, spiritual mixture of life and hope that we have what God loves most: the makings of a wonderful, sacred party!

Some possible readings:

a) Isaiah 56:3-8

b) Hear wisdom from an adaptation of the play, “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner”:

“In the final analysis, it doesn’t matter what we think [about this sacred union]. The only thing that matters is what these two people feel, and how much they feel, for each other.

As for you two and the problems you’re going to have, they seem almost unimaginable. But you’ll have no problem with me. But you do know—I’m sure you know—what you’re up against. There’ll be a hundred million people, right here in this country, who will be shocked and offended and appalled at the

two of you. And the two of you will just have to ride that out, maybe every day for the rest of your lives. You can try to ignore those people. You can feel sorry for them and for their prejudices and their bigotry and their blind hatreds and fears. But where necessary, you'll just have to cling tight to each other...

Anyone could make a case—and a good case—against your [sacred union]. The arguments are so obvious that nobody HAS to make them. But you're two wonderful people. Who happened to fall in love. And happen to be of [the same sex]. And I think that now, no matter what kind of a case someone could make AGAINST your [sacred union], there would be only one thing worse: and that would be if, knowing what you two are, knowing what you two have, and knowing what you two feel, you didn't [pursue this dream]..."

c) John 15:9-13, 17

d) First Corinthians 13:1-13

e) Matthew 5:1-16

[Note: A wonderful translation of the Beatitudes—from the original Aramaic, which was Jesus' own language—follows]

Blessings, congratulations, and joy to the poor in spirit!
God's domain belongs to them.

Blessings, congratulations, and joy to those who grieve!
God will console them.

Blessings, congratulations, and joy to the gentle!
They will truly inherit all things.

Blessings, congratulations, and joy to those who hunger
and thirst for justice!

They will have a feast.

Blessings, congratulations, and joy to the merciful!
They will receive the mercy of God.

Blessings, congratulations, and joy to those who
struggle to purify their hearts!

For, by such, will they see God.

Blessings, congratulations, and joy to those who work for peace!

They will be known as God's children.

Blessings, congratulations, and joy are those who are persecuted in their struggle for justice!

The Domain of God is theirs.

You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world...and your light is to shine, unconcealed, in the presence of your community, so that each and all can see your ministry and therefore sing praises to our Creator in the heavens.

RESOURCES

Possible seeds of growth and action:

Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography, John Dominic Crossan

The Essential Jesus, John Dominic Crossan

The Gospel According to Jesus, Stephen Mitchell

Jesus Before Christianity, Albert Nolan

The Five Gospels, Robert Funk, et al

God-Birthing, Michael Dwinell

Being Priest to One Another, Michael Dwinell

All Saints, Robert Ellsberg

If You Meet the Buddha on the Road, Sheldon Kopp

Original Blessing, Matthew Fox

Prayers for a Planetary Planet, Fr. Edward Hays

Childsong, Monksong, Brother Tolbert McCarroll

The Last Temptation of Christ, Nikos Kazantzakis

The Road Less Traveled, M. Scott Peck

The Different Drum, M. Scott Peck

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, AA World Services

Living Sober, AA World Services

Recovery: Plain and Simple, John Lee

Tao Te Ching (various translations)

The Holy Man, Susan Trott
How Can I Help?, Ram Dass and Paul Gorman
The Religions of Man, Huston Smith
In Any Given Moment, Thomas L. Jackson
Me & Us: A Journey of Self-discovery and Re-creation,
Thomas L. Jackson
The various writings about Dorothy Day
The various writings of Henri Nouwen
The various writings of Anthony de Mello
The various writings of Thomas Merton
The various writings of John Spong
The various writings of Hugh Prather

PEACE
BE TO
YOU.