



# **A SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION FOR UNITARIANS AND FREE CHRISTIANS\***

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SYDNEY UNITARIAN CHURCH - SUNDAY, 4 JUNE 2006

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Celebrant:* The Service of Holy Communion operates on a number of different levels, but on all of those levels there is an object lesson of the cosmic law of sacrifice. The law of sacrifice is also the law of manifestation, as well as the law of love, for manifestation is sacrifice, and sacrifice is selfless giving (that is, love). All nature must give forth or die.

First, the Service of Holy Communion is a memorial of the sacrifice of the Master Jesus on the Cross. We remember and commemorate, not just his death, but also his sacrificial life. He left us a wonderful example of how to live, for he constantly gave of himself selflessly to others, so that others might live. Indeed, it is written that Jesus came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. That requires that we give of ourselves to others. Jesus is the Way-Shower. He shows us the way by

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\* This Liturgy has been prepared from a number of different sources. However, specific acknowledgment is made, and gratitude is expressed, to the Liberal Catholic Church, from whose Liturgy and other publications certain portions of this Service have been taken and adapted.

awakening us to the possibilities of our own nature. The element of bread is a symbol of spiritual food in the form of life-changing thoughts and ideas, and the element of the wine symbolizes the circulation of those thoughts and ideas in our consciousness. Only those actions through which shines the light of the Cross are worthy of the disciple.

Secondly, we also remember in our Service all the other great World Teachers who have descended into incarnation in order to help us forward on our way. We think of Moses, the Buddha, Sri Krishna, Confucius, the Prophet Muhammad, Lao Tzu, Zoroaster and all the other Saints and Holy Ones whose pupils you may aspire to become. May they show us the light we seek and give us the strong aid of their compassion and their wisdom. We give thanks for their great lives. There is a wonderful thing about the Law of Sacrifice which the saints discovered, and which is true also for us. They rejoiced in sacrifice, sorrow and suffering, because they offered every act of sacrifice as an offering on behalf of the world - thus to lessen, by their own voluntary giving and enduring, the pain and loss of others. We also think of the "still small voice" within, the voice of conscience and reason that is always with us as our inner guide to wisdom and truth.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the Service of Holy Communion is an acted parable or dramatization of the ongoing cosmic sacrifice - the self-limitation of life itself - in which the Spirit of Life ever descends into matter, ever offers itself, and ever gives of itself to itself in manifestation, so that life, in all of its multiplicity of form, is perpetuated. In this sacrificial outgiving - the putting forth of the Eternal Principle of Life as the Logos who freely offers Itself as the

ensouling life of matter - the one life manifests itself in all things as all things but ever remains. Said the great avatar, Sri Krishna: "I established this universe with a portion of myself; and I remain." This is the enduring, eternal sacrifice by which the world is nourished and sustained, the sublimest myth known to humanity, the "Man Crucified in Space" of Hindu mythology, the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" of Christianity - the Self-Givingness of life. In this cosmic sacrifice - in which the Life-giver is, as it were, crucified upon the Cross of matter and imprisoned in form - the indwelling life is poured out like wine. This is a continuing process in which each of us has a part. When we partake of the elements of bread and wine, which also represent the common life in ourselves, we remind ourselves that we are all one, that all life is one and indivisible, and that every form that exists is a symbol of the supreme oblation, the Spirit of Life giving itself to its world that it might have life. Yes, the Spirit of Life, which breathes into existence all that is, is both transcendent and immanent in our universe, suffering, evolving, acting with and through all life.

Fourthly, the Service of Holy Communion is a means of showing the thanks, the worship and the devotion which we feel towards life and towards our Master. Each one of us is an altar on which sacrifice can be offered. We are present under the appearance of bread and wine. We offer ourselves, that we may die to self. Let us offer up ourselves to others, and to life itself, so that we might be used for the betterment of humanity and all life. By giving ourselves in loving service, in unselfish devotion and renunciation for the good of others, our lives as well as the lives of others are

transformed. Yes, let us crucify our selfishness and egotism on the altar of love.

Fifthly, the Service of Holy Communion is a sign of the love that we ought to have among ourselves one to another. May this Holy Communion be to us a beginning of better things, as we gather to seek, to sustain, and to share.

### **PRAYER FOR PEACE AND PURITY**

*Celebrant:* Children of the Light, we meet today to affirm our belief that we belong to a common humanity. We are in truth all brothers and sisters one to another - with Jew, with Muslim, with Christian, with Hindu and Buddhist and also with those who hold no faith. May our Church be a symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Spirit of Life, we meet on holy ground, yet so often do we forget the glory of our heritage and wander from the path which leads to righteousness. May we renew our resolution to cast out from ourselves the evil spirit of separateness and selfishness and to exercise mastery over ourselves, that we may the more effectively help others. We ask these things in the Spirit of Jesus. Amen.

### **PRAYER OF CONSECRATION**

*Celebrant:* Spirit and Giver of Life, by whom were all things made, with whom as the indwelling life do all things exist, and in whom as the transcendent glory all things live and move and have their being, consecrate this bread and wine to be, for us, the Body and Blood of our Lord of Love and consecrate us, to partake of this holy meal, that we who receive the sacred mysteries of the Body and Blood may be lifted into the immensity of Divine Love and that,

being filled with a high endeavour, we may ever be mindful of your indwelling Presence and breathe forth the fragrance of a holy life. Amen.

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Celebrant:* We pray the prayer Jesus taught us, saying ...

*The celebrant and the congregation now say together "The Lord's Prayer", as follows:*

Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **THE SIGN OF PEACE**

*Celebrant:* This is the Ancient Wisdom, the Truth behind all True Religion: The One becomes the many, that the many might know themselves as One. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

*The Sign of Peace is now offered.*

## **COMMUNION**

*Celebrant:* It is written: “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take this and eat it. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’”

“In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”

All are welcome to partake of Communion.

“Take and eat this bread, this is my body. ... Take and drink this cup, this is my blood.”

*The celebrant and the congregation then partake of Communion.*

## **FINAL BLESSING**

*Celebrant:* There is a peace that passes understanding; it abides in the hearts of those who live in the Eternal. There is a power that makes all things new; it lives and moves in those who know the Self as One. May that peace brood over you, that power uplift you, till you come to that day in which there is no sunset and no dawning, till you see your ☐ star shine forth. Amen.

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