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THE BANQUET OF THE COSMOS

Introduction (*Optional*)

Members of the Jesus movements regularly ate a meal together when they met as a community.

It was a characteristic that they had in common with virtually every other social group in their world.

It was considered primary to the early developments in the movements' meal liturgy.

These meal traditions were not about personal salvation or payment for sin. Instead, they were about actions and offering hospitality, social identity, and being in solidarity with those around us.

The liturgical movements centred on celebration, presence, and joy. I invite you into the spirit of those meals...

Presentation

Beginnings and endings shape this meal gathering today.
We celebrate a faithful, strong past.
We prepare for a future yet to be conceived.
We call it the rhythm of life.

Thanksgiving

v1 May it be well with you.

All **And also with you.**

v1 Sacred is the cosmos, whirling, expanding, living, dying, yearning for abundance and freedom.

All **We come to this table awe-struck creatures
conscious that as we take these few short steps
the whole cosmos—gathered up in us—journeys with us, and in us.**

v2 How can we not stand in wonder and awe.
Those same vast processes that created
galaxies and suns and stars and planets,
continue to shape our existence...

v1 Out of the Big Bang the stars;

All **Out of the stardust the Earth;
Out of the molecules of the Earth, life.**

v1 Earth was planted with the seeds of its future;

by the sacrifice of our sun,
Earth flowered forth.
In the human species, nature became conscious of itself
and open to fulfilment in thought and word and deed.

All **Blessed be Earth.**

v1 Blessed be Earth.

All **Earth, our home.**

v2 We celebrate the interconnectedness that is our life—all life.

Stardust and mountains,
the light at dusk and the moment of dawn;
wild flowers and rain forests;
gilled ones of river and sea
and the feathered ones of the air;
kangaroo and desert dingo,
earth-worm, butterfly, and bacteria;
First/Native Peoples and recent arrivals;
sacred wisdom of sages, and the consciousness of prophets.

v1 Every day we encounter the cosmos.

All **It is our bodies, our food, our air, our everything.**

v1 One thing is made up of all other things.

All **Being and beauty flow freely through
all the universe in this great procession of life.**

Bread and Wine

v1 As we gather together to share and eat food
we also remember the stories around all the meals
in the wisdom tradition of the Galilean sage we call Jesus...

v2 Born of a woman and the Hebrew gene pool,
he was a creature of earth, a moment in the biological evolution of this planet.

v1 Like all human beings, he carried within himself
the signature of the supernovas
and the geology and life history of the Earth...

v2 For just as the Milky Way is the universe in the form of a galaxy,
and the Wedge-tailed Eagle is the universe in the form of a bird,
he was and we are, the universe in the form of a human.

All **May we care for our planet.**

May we nurture this piece of stardust!

May we celebrate with the cosmos!

(Silence)

Bread is broken several times

v1 And so we remember the living tradition...

How, during a meal, bread would be taken
and after thanks given, it would be broken and shared
with both friend and stranger.

v2 This piece of bread is the body of the whole cosmos.
Look deeply and you notice the sunshine in the bread,
the blue sky in the bread,
the clouds and the great earth in the bread.

The whole cosmos has come together
in order to bring to us this piece of bread.
(Short silence)

White wine is poured out

v1 After conversation some Wine would be taken,
thanks for it would be given,
and poured out and shared with all those present.

v1 Wine, fruit of the vine, gift of nature.
v2 Since all food is cosmic and born of the sun and photosynthesis,
sharing a meal of bread and wine
renders the universe both sacred and intimate.

(Short silence)

v1 Bread and Wine,
Elements for life on Earth...
In solidarity with life...

Response

v2 In sharing this banquet, we in our time and place,
enter into a new relationship,
with sacred wisdom,
with the planet, and
with one another,

All **to feel our kinship with all life,**
to raise our voice in the service of life,

All **to love kindness, and to seek justice,**
to live in harmony

All **and awaken to peace.**

v2 May we sense the wonder of what might yet be.

All **We are part of Earth**
Earth is part of us.

v1 And as we consider this Earth, our home,

All **may we continue to walk upon it**
gently and with reverence.

Communion

The Bread and White Wine—with conversation—is served in small groups around the Gathering space

Shaped from the various published writings of:

- Margie Abbott. **Cosmic Sparks. Igniting a Re-Enchantment with the Sacred.** Bayswater. Coventry Press, 200
 - David Bumbaugh. Selected Communion Liturgies published in (ed) Carl Seaburg. **The Communion Book.** Boston. Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, 1993, **plus** “*Toward a Humanist Vocabulary of Reverence*”. Boulder International Humanist Institute, Fourth Annual Symposium, Boulder, Colorado. (22 February 2003). <http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/bumbaughdavid/humanist_reverence.pdf>
 - Elizabeth Johnson. “*Deep Incarnation: Prepare to be Astonished*”, UNIFAS Conference, Rio de Janeiro, (7-14 July 2010). <<https://sgfp.wordpress.com/2011/02/15/deep-incarnation-prepare-to-be-astonished/>>
 - Bruce Sanguin. “Cosmic Sacrifice” and “Feast of the Cosmos” in **If Darwin Prayed: Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics.** Vancouver. ES Press, 2010
- Plus** *Thich Nhat Hanh, Gretta Vosper, Matthew Fox, Thomas Berry, David Galston, and others... with grateful thanks.*