

Sacrifice
UU Community Church of Santa Monica
Small Group Ministry
March 2014

Chalice Lighting

Out of our busyness, we are called back into balance, back into ourselves and the silence of present being. But it is not just back into ourselves to which we are called; it is also to the awareness of the continuous presence of the environment around us and within us. We are called to remember our relationships and our dependencies. We are called to once again feel the oneness which sustains our being in balance with creation, and to do so with wonder and appreciation.

- Susan Manker-Seale

Sharing Silence 3 minutes

You may wish to bring your attention to your breath, or move a bit until you have found a comfortable seat. If silence is not a familiar experience to you, three minutes may seem long. If you are accustomed to silence, it may seem short.

On Our Hearts 20 minutes

This is a time to share wonderful news or a heavy heart - the major highs and lows of your life you'd like everyone to keep in their hearts or in their prayers for you.

Covenant and Ground Rules

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group;
- to let the leader know if I will be absent or need to quit;
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others;
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others;
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart;
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, or giving advice;
- to ask questions gently and only if necessary;
- and to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.

- Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins, *Heart to Heart* (adapted)

Readings

We must want for others, not ourselves alone.

-Eleanor Roosevelt

We were talking about things that happen sometimes when you take an active stance for or against certain things in the world; she observed that when you speak out, when you take an unpopular or uncomfortable stand for something you are also making a commitment to sacrifice your own comfort, to risk alienation, to sacrifice friendships even. So, the sacrifice becomes not only intentionally a practice, but secondary to what is right and just.

– Friend talking to her daughter

Siren Song

Margaret Atwood

This is the one song everyone
would like to learn: the song
that is irresistible:

the song that forces men
to leap overboard in squadrons
even though they see the beached skulls

the song nobody knows
because anyone who has heard it
is dead, and the others can't remember.

Shall I tell you the secret
and if I do, will you get me
out of this bird suit?

I don't enjoy it here
squatting on this island
looking picturesque and mythical

with these two feathery maniacs,
I don't enjoy singing
this trio, fatal and valuable.

I will tell the secret to you,
to you, only to you.
Come closer. This song

is a cry for help: Help me!
Only you, only you can,
you are unique

at last. Alas
it is a boring song
but it works every time.

Questions for consideration:

1. Is there a time in your life when you made a “sacrifice play” by giving up your chance for something you wanted, either for the good of the team, or for another person? What did that feel like? Was it worth it?
2. Has the sacrifice of others shaped who you have become? How?
3. Does sacrifice require suffering? If there is no discomfort or distress or longing or wishing--a giving up of something or someone else--is it a sacrifice?
4. The word “sacrifice” has been defined as “to make holy,” and the word comes from the same root as “sacred” and “sacrament.” What role, if any, does sacrifice play in your spiritual life? In Unitarian Universalism?

Sharing 60 minutes

Closing Activity / Reflecting On Our Time Together

Please share how you showed up in our time together. Do you wish you had said something more, less, different? How are you leaving our time together? Feeling words are ok: sad, mad, glad, peaceful, powerful, joyful.

Closing Words

We are really alive when we listen to each other, to the silences of each other as well as the words and what lies behind the words.

-Frederick Buechner, author and Presbyterian minister