

February 2 2025
We Were Made For These Times

“Our creativity, vast and wondrous and diverse as it is,
is to be used for spreading compassion and justice.
This is the way we imitate God, as Thomas Aquinas reminds us.
This is our acting as co-creators with God.
How are we doing?”
Matthew Fox

Prelude



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Land Acknowledgement

We are gathered on the unceded land of the Huron-Wendat, Anishaanabe and the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit peoples. We acknowledge the community, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations. Holy Cross also acknowledges that it was founded upon exclusions and erasures of many Indigenous peoples, including those on whose land this institution is located. This acknowledgement demonstrates our commitment to beginning the process of working to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.



A woman with long, flowing red hair is seen from behind, walking away on a paved road that stretches into the distance. The road is flanked by snow-covered fields, and in the background, there are dark, snow-dusted mountains under a grey sky. The woman is wearing a dark coat and a patterned scarf. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Greeting

To hope means ‘to put one’s trust in reality’, to believe in it so that it carries with it a future. When we hope, we become creditors to the future. Fear, by contrast, deprives us of all belief, withdraws all credit granted to reality. It thus prevents the future.

Han, Byung-Chul. The Spirit of Hope

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A close-up photograph of a hand reaching up towards a bright, glowing sun in a hazy, orange sky. The hand is positioned in the foreground, with fingers slightly spread, reaching towards the sun which is in the upper center of the frame. The background is a soft, out-of-focus orange and yellow, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is hopeful and uplifting.

Gathering Hymn: God of Every New Beginning

God of every new beginning,
each rekindling, all fresh starts,
reawakening joy and wonder,
rousing nerve in fearful hearts:
shepherd us through doubts and shadows;
with new promise prod and brace;
show us how our past connects us
to your future full of grace.

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God Incarnate, dwelling with us,
Word made flesh by human birth,
Love embodied in our story,
Suffering Servant here on earth:
shape our lives by your self-giving,
feeding, healing, washing feet;
help us still behold your image
in each heart and face we meet.

God the Spirit, life-bestower,
singing wind and dancing fire,
fount of faith's imagination,
hope's endurance, love's desire:
come, renew your gifts among us,
let them form our minds and wills;
fire us with the truth that frees us;
breathe again the peace that stills.

Gathering Prayer

Holy One, your love unites all of us who live on this planet. We are truly brothers and sisters, joined in spirit through your abiding presence. Gather to your heart all the people who live in difficult situations. Enfold all those on the edge of society in your heart of compassion. Guide me to find and enter into actions that will help relieve the burdens of those who are oppressed. Thank you for the immensity of your love.

Rupp, Joyce. Prayers of Boundless Compassion



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First Reading

What can be so stressful in moments of change or challenge is feeling unprepared, caught off-guard, somehow out of control. The Elders of the Hopi Nation in Oraibi, Arizona offer this timely wisdom: “There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold onto the shore. They will feel that they are torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its destination, The Elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open and our heads above water. And I say, see who is there with you and celebrate...

The time for the lone wolf is over, Gather yourselves. Banish the word struggle from your vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.

”Kaira Lingo Jewel We Were Made for These Times

A serene winter landscape featuring a snow-covered hill in the foreground. Several bare, frost-covered trees stand against a backdrop of a soft, hazy sky. A bright, glowing sun or moon is visible in the center of the sky, casting a warm, golden light. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

Acclamation

Glory to God throughout the Universe and peace to all who dwell on Earth.
Glory to God throughout the Universe and peace to all who dwell on Earth.

We glory in your Light.
We glory in your Life.
We glory in your Love, O God.
Glory to you.

Glory to God throughout the Universe and peace to all who dwell on Earth.
Glory to God throughout the Universe and peace to all who dwell on Earth.

Second Reading

My friends, do not lose heart. We were made for these times. I have heard from so many recently who are deeply and properly bewildered.... Ours is a time of almost daily astonishment and often righteous rage over the latest degradations of what matters most... You are right in your assessments... Yet, I urge you, ask you, gentle you, to please not spend your spirit dry by bewailing these difficult times. Especially do not lose hope. Most particularly because, the fact is that we were made for these times. Yes. For years, we have been learning, practicing, been in training for and just waiting to meet on this exact plain of engagement.

—Clarissa Pinkola Estés “Letter to a Young Activist During Troubled Times”

Sermon

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Gathering Hymn: Choose to Hope

Hope is born when we choose to believe
that love is stronger than hatred

Love is born when our hearts learn to see
that every person is sacred.

Refrain

In times of darkness, in times of fear:

Choose to hope, choose to love, and know that God is near.

Hope will grow when we choose to believe
that we are sisters and brothers

Love will grow when our hearts learn to see
the life we share with each other.

Refrain

Hope will shine when we choose to believe
A little child will lead us.
Love will shine when our hearts learn to see
That God is dwelling within us.

Refrain: In times of darkness, in times of fear:
Choose to hope, choose to love, and know that God is near.

Sing out hope through the violence and fear.
God is present beside us.
Prince of Peace make your home with us here
Your love and wisdom will guide us. Refrain

Prayers of the People:

In these days of uncertainty and fear for many of the vulnerable in the United States, let us pray for migrants, illegal immigrants, the LGBTQ community, and women.

It is vital to keep hope alive. What signs of hope do you see?

May the Holy One wrap these signs in love.

Sign of Peace

My Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

New American Standard Bible

Let us offer one another a sign of Peace...

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Thanksgiving Prayer

The Christian mystic Meister Eckhart said, “if the only prayer you say in your entire life is ‘Thank You’ that would suffice”. So we give thanks.

Thanks for our life, our connectedness, our knowledge that we are not alone, that we are at home in God and can never be separated from that home, even if at times we cease to be aware of it.

We give thanks for the whole eco-system, for all the processes of the Cosmos and especially for the recycling process of birth, death and new life that springs out of death.

We give thanks for the whole of human history, of people moving from dependency to independence and on to inter-dependence.

We give thanks for the evolution of Religion and for the growth in our own spiritual life within the never-ending journey of Spirituality.

We give thanks for all the mystics and prophets, priests and sages and especially for Jesus the Christ who came to empower us and enable us to be in touch with that of God within each of us.

We give thanks for his transforming love and his new way of living.
With grateful thanks we acknowledge the greatness, the mystery and the ever-presence of God singing.....



Holy Wholly Holy

Wholly Holy One
Wholly Holy One

All the universe is full of your Glory
All the universe is full of your Love

Wholly Holy One
Wholly Holy One

Blessed is the One who comes in your name
Ho-sanna, Hosannain the highest.

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Wholly Holy One
Wholly Holy One

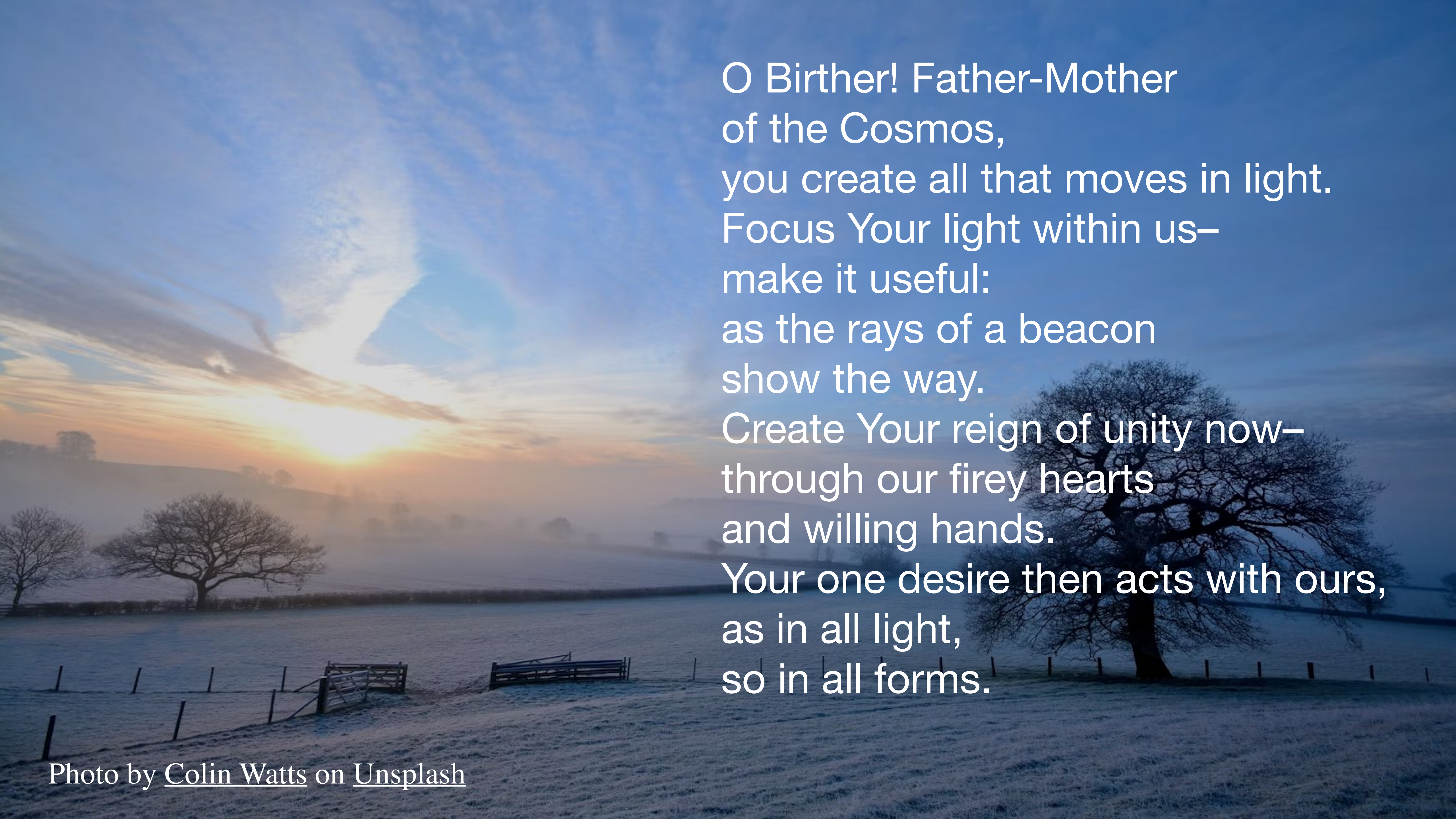
Communion Prayers

Now as Jesus did on the night of his betrayal, we take bread and wine to remember that the creative and transforming power of God is present even in suffering and death. In so doing we acknowledge that the world is full of death and resurrection, rocks turning into soil, dead flesh nurturing new life and rain greening the face of the Earth.

So, we take this bread, symbol of Christ, symbol of us, symbol of the Cosmos and become aware of the presence of God. We remember Jesus having supper with his followers, taking bread in his hands and looking at each one, said, "This is like my body, assembled over vast stretches of time by the kin-doms of life straining toward perfection.

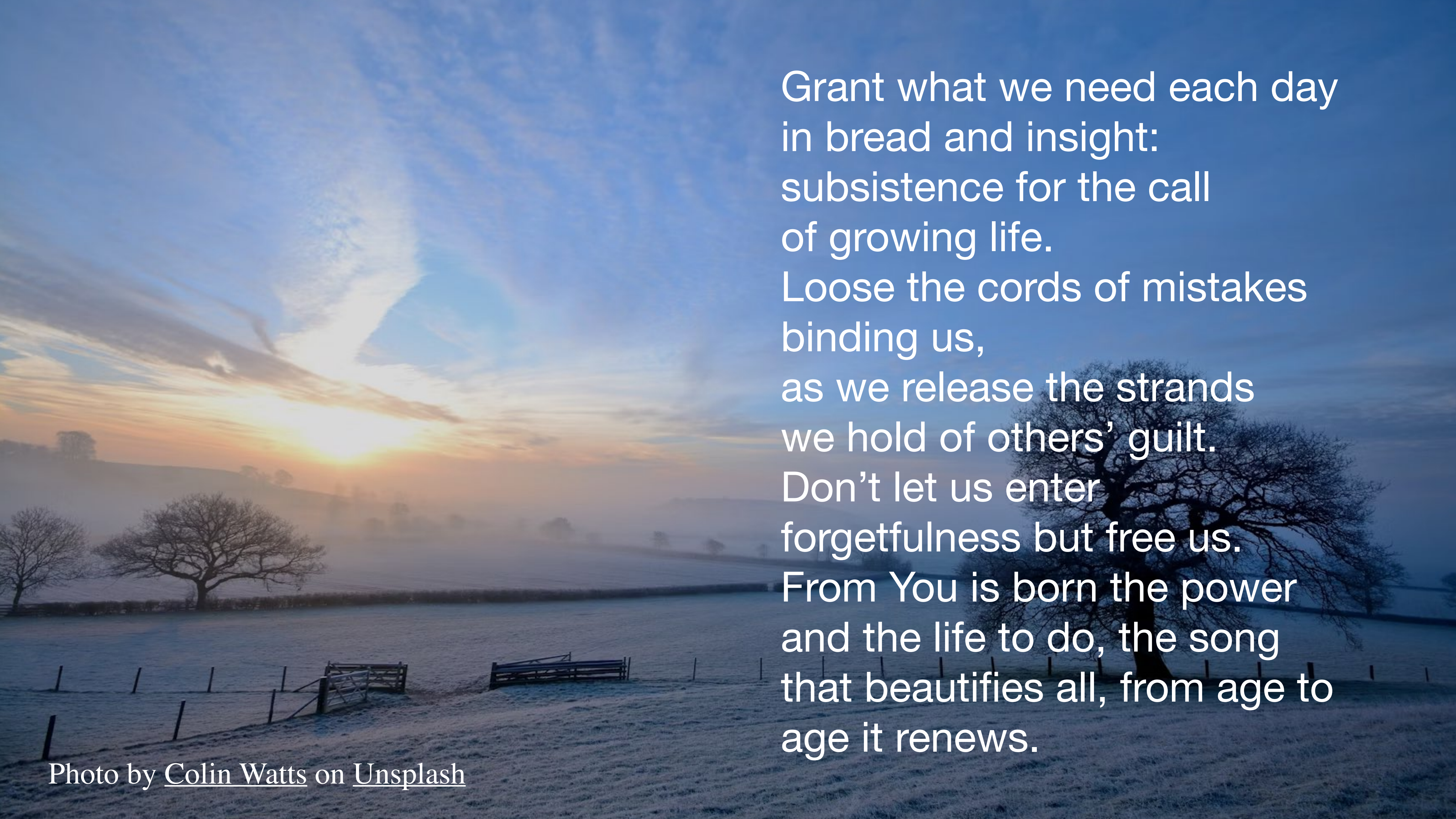
And taking the wine, he lovingly gazed at them and said: "And this is like my blood, formed by light rivers of galaxies running toward and emptying into the sea of Being that coalesced into this vessel of mine, now poured out for you, and pouring into you"

We take this wine, symbol of life given and life renewed, symbol of the flow of blood within our body and the pulse of life throughout the Cosmos and are fed in our spirits for the mystic pilgrimage. Behold the things we can see which point us to the eternal things which we cannot see but which are ever-present.

A serene landscape at sunrise or sunset. The sky is a mix of soft blues and oranges, with wispy clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow. In the foreground, there's a body of water, possibly a lake or a wide river, with a large, leafless tree on the right bank. A wooden fence runs across the middle ground. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

O Birther! Father-Mother
of the Cosmos,
you create all that moves in light.
Focus Your light within us—
make it useful:
as the rays of a beacon
show the way.
Create Your reign of unity now—
through our firey hearts
and willing hands.
Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light,
so in all forms.

Photo by [Colin Watts](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A serene landscape at sunrise or sunset. The sky is a mix of soft blues and oranges, with wispy clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow. In the foreground, there's a grassy field with a wooden fence. A large, leafless tree stands on the right side of the field. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Grant what we need each day
in bread and insight:
subsistence for the call
of growing life.
Loose the cords of mistakes
binding us,
as we release the strands
we hold of others' guilt.
Don't let us enter
forgetfulness but free us.
From You is born the power
and the life to do, the song
that beautifies all, from age to
age it renews.

Photo by [Colin Watts](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Communion Hymn: In the Singing

In the singing, in the silence,
in the hands expectant, open
in the blessing, in the breaking,
in the Presence at this table—
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the wine of grace:
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the bread of peace.

In the question, in the answer,
in the moment of acceptance,
in the heart's cry, in the healing,
in the circle of your people—
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the wine of grace:
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the bread of peace.

Prayer After Communion

Holy One, this meal we shared together is a remembrance of your radical embrace of the outcast and oppressed.

May it strengthen us as we open our minds and hearts to new ways of recognizing your presence among us. Amen.

■
Sending Hymn Welcome Doubt, Refine Our Thinking

Welcome Doubt! refine Our thinking.
Urge us further into light.
Lead us to a greater dawning
from the shadows of our night.

Welcome Knowledge! Food for Wisdom
leaving prejudice behind.
Pledge of science, fruit of reason.
Seeking love with all our mind.

Urge us further into light.
Lead us to a greater dawning
from the shadows of our night

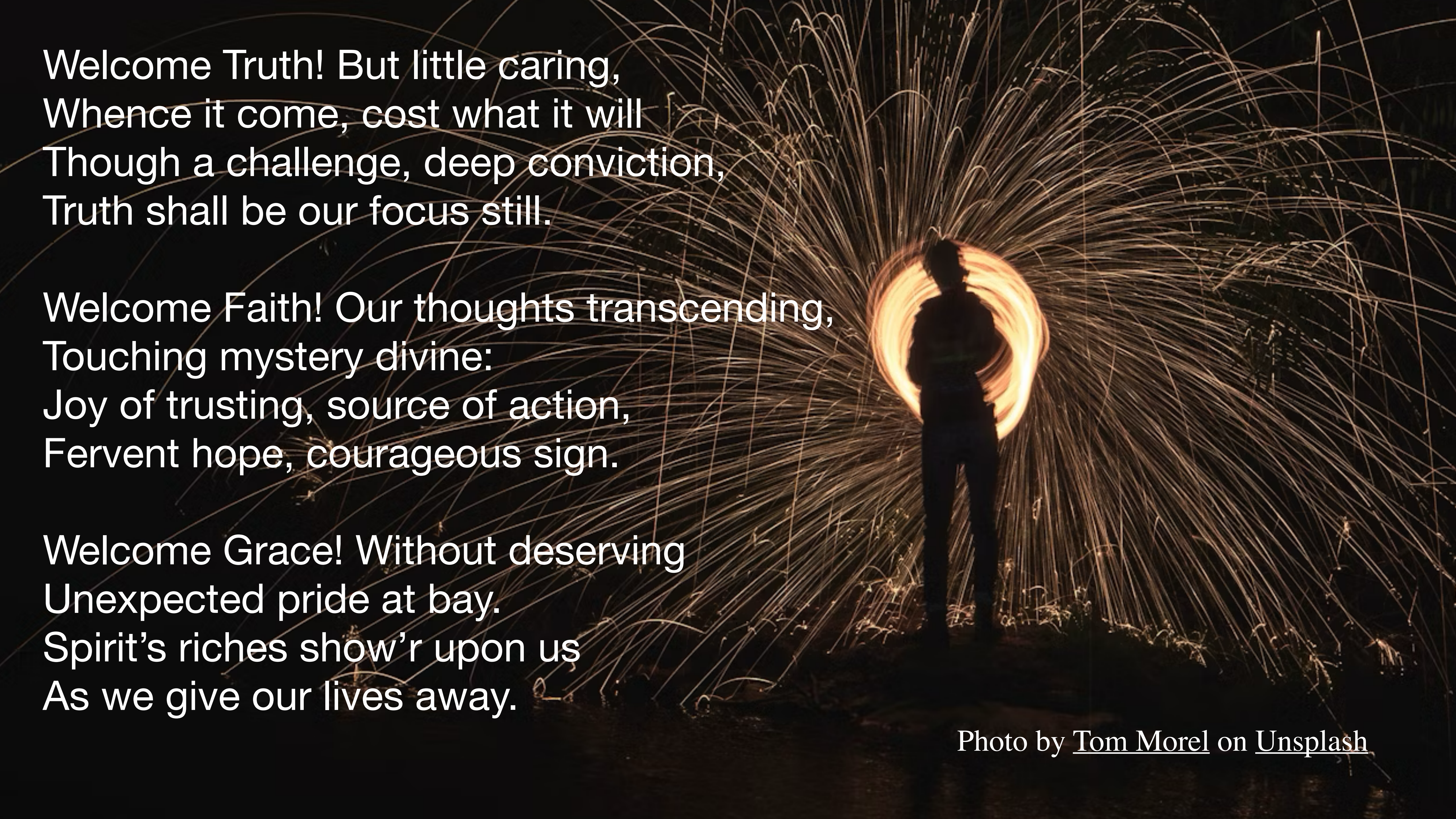
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Welcome Truth! But little caring,
Whence it come, cost what it will
Though a challenge, deep conviction,
Truth shall be our focus still.

Welcome Faith! Our thoughts transcending,
Touching mystery divine:
Joy of trusting, source of action,
Fervent hope, courageous sign.

Welcome Grace! Without deserving
Unexpected pride at bay.
Spirit's riches show'r upon us
As we give our lives away.

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Blessing/Dismissal

We pray that the Light of compassion shining in our souls will recognize and receive the Light shining in others,
that together we will care for creation with respect
and have gratitude for all that exists.

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Announcements

"We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic.
Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings,
different hopes, different dreams."
Jimmy Carter

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