

Thanks For The Onions

He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from this, all of you." Matthew 26:27

When my older sister was first married, my mother kindly tried to make her husband feel welcome at our family Thanksgiving. She asked him about what dishes were traditionally served at his family's Thanksgiving meals. In the list was a dish that we had not normally served: creamed onions. My mother added creamed onions to the meal for Bob. As we sat at the table passing serving dishes around, my mother noticed that Bob had not taken any creamed onions. When asked about it he said, "Oh, we always did have them at Thanksgiving, but I don't like them."

At this time of year it is common to ask people, "What are you thankful for?" We list all those things that we love, like and appreciate. Family. Friends. Food. It is a reasonable connection--this is a good thing, so I give thanks to God for it. We thank God for necessities and luxuries, successes and survival. Even in the Bible songs about thanksgiving are most often attached to a reason. Give thanks to the Lord because he is good, faithful, etc.

Maybe we should consider giving thanks for the onions. Looking back, I realize that even though Bob did not like creamed onions, it was still a moment for thanks. Somebody cares about me, is welcoming me, made an effort for me. Even though I don't like onions, there is plenty of other food here on the table that I do like. There may be some effort involved in giving thanks even in the midst of things we do not like. Good. Because the reasons for thanking God are far greater than satisfying our likes and wants.

When Jesus was gathered at the table with his followers—his friends—at an emotional last supper, he gave thanks. He thanked God for the cup, a sign of his sacrifice and suffering. Sharing that cup is a blessing for us, but also a reminder that we are called to follow in Jesus' difficult footsteps. And give thanks.

by Rev Karen Oehl

*God,
I thank you for
family, and friends,
and onions, and
November weather,
and traffic
and thinking up
ways of making
a vegetarian
Thanksgiving meal, and
your son and our Savior.*

Amen

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