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ELLIOTT THINKSHEETS
309 L.Eliz.Dr., Craigville, MA 02636
Phone 508.775.8008
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"THEIR LONGING IS OURS"

A LITANY OF ASCENT, TO BE USED AS AN INTROIT

My beloved friend Rabbi Chaim Stern wrote the following words "For two readers or more," and I've adapted them to liturgist + three readers. In the Reform prayerbook GATES OF PRAYER, which he edited (Central Conference of America Rabbis/75), it's the responsory to the prayer, in Hebrew, which is (p.188, GATES OF UNDERSTANDING, UAHC/77) "the first benedition of the Tefillah, known as the Avot, 'Fathers' or 'Ancestors'....praises the God of all generations for His loving and redemptive acts." In GP its called "The Distant Shores of Blessing" (the two parts, prayer & reading, pp.212f)....I call this according to the use I make of it, "A Litany of Ascent, to be used as an Introit"--usu. to begin a retreat or study session, but it would be equally effective to begin a worship whose theme is longing.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. There should be as much silence as voice: between parts, allow sufficient digestion time for prayer and meditation....including for the last part: after its silence, the liturgist closes with "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen" or "In Jesus' name, amen" or "Amen."
2. The four should practice, including the times of silence--both because worship leaders should worship in preparation & to improve the quality of their leadership.

Liturgist: Blessed is the power that moved our ancestors and sustained them on their journey.
silence

First Reader: Abraham left familiar ways, set forth to an unknown land, and learned to silence terror with a ready heart.
silence

Second Reader: Isaac came to know how parents may risk their children for the sake of a vision; out of his weakness he forged the strength to live and love.
silence

Third Reader: Jacob dreamed and fought and grew, at last to become the blessing he wrestled for.
silence

Liturgist: So did those who came before us send a blessing fashioned out of their own longing to outgrow themselves. And their longing is ours.
silence

All Four:

Blessed is the power that sustains us on our journeys to the distant shores of blessing.
silence

Liturgist:
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen (or)
In Jesus' name, amen (or)
Amen.