



## **'Bread In The Wilderness'**

### ***Invitation***

'Jesus said to the disciples, "Come away, into the wilderness, all by yourselves and rest a while"' (Mk 6:31)

**Lord, thank you for this invitation, we come with you.**

"Come ... for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time for singing has come, the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree is laden with fruit, and the vines are in blossom; each one giving a unique fragrance" (Song 2:11-13)

**Lord, open our senses and also our hearts.**

We confess to God the ways in which we have failed to live in harmony with the earth.

*Pause*

For closing our hearts to wild nature's voices which sought to nurture our relationship with God,  
**Lord, we ask your forgiveness.**

For failing to listen and to learn from the wisdom of the wild, allowing it to shape our daily lives,  
**Lord, we ask your forgiveness.**

For ignoring care and compassion toward other humans and also 'the more than human world',  
**Lord, we ask your forgiveness.**

For rejecting the way of meekness in our relationship with all living things and the earth herself,  
**Lord, we ask your forgiveness.**

A wilderness Peacemeal is a place where all are welcome and blessed:

**"For God makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous."** (Mat 5:45)

A wilderness Peacemeal is a place where we are reminded of God's constant provision:

**"Consider the ravens, and all other birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them."** (Lk 12:24; Mt 6:26)

A wilderness Peacemeal is a place where the risen Jesus is encountered:

**'Just after daybreak Jesus stood on the beach ... they saw a charcoal fire, with fish on it and bread ... then Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."**' (Jn 21:4,9,12)

### ***Sharing the bread*** (At the commencement of eating the meal)

Now let us share the bread together. Bread, for humans, is 'the staff of life'. It represents food in its most basic form. Among the peoples of the earth bread symbolizes what meets our vital physical needs. Bread is also filled with deep spiritual significance. Bread is a gift from God.

**Jesus prayed, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Give us today the bread that we need.** (Mat 6:10-11)

In the wilderness, the voice of temptation said, "If you are the Son of God command this stone to become a loaf of bread". Jesus replied, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone'" (Lk 4:3-4; Deut 8:3)

**Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; those who come to me shall not hunger ... I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread they will live for ever; I am the bread given for the life of the world."** (Jn 6:35,51)

*The bread is broken, shared equally between each of the participants at the meal - initially a portion is eaten reflectively, the remainder is then eaten as part of the meal.*

## WE EAT THE MEAL TOGETHER

### ***Sharing the cup*** (At the conclusion of eating the meal)

Now let us share this cup of water together. Jesus speaks of 'living water'. This is a Bedouin phrase to describe water that bubbles up through rock and sand to create an oasis - in contrast to water stored in a jar or carried in an animal skin. Water also has deep spiritual significance. Water is a gift from God.

**Jesus said, "Those who believe in me shall never thirst"** (Jn 6:35)

Jesus said to the woman, "Give me a drink". She replied, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan?" Jesus replied, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is speaking to you, you would have asked me and I would have given you living water ... Those who drink of the water that I offer will never be thirsty. The water that I give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (Jn 4:7-10, 14)

**Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink. The person who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of their heart shall flow rivers of living water'"** (Jn 7:37-38)

*The water is poured into two glasses shared and passed between each of the participants at the meal. Drink in a way that expresses your thirst for life and things that are spiritual.*

## ***Declaration***

Having shared our Peacemeal together, in friendship with one another and in the company of the risen Jesus, we now turn our faces towards the journey ahead. A journey that will lead us into a deeper relationship with the earth and wild nature, which will provide the opportunity to feed both physically and spiritually on feral food.

**We declare our commitment to make this journey.**

‘Israel spoke against God, saying, “Can God spread a table in the wilderness? Even though Moses struck the rock so that water gushed out and torrents overflowed. Can God also give bread, or provide food for God’s people?” (Ps 78:19-20)

**We turn away from the blindness that leads to grumbling and ingratitude.**

‘Yet God commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven: God rained down on them *manna* to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven. Humans ate the bread of angels; God sent them food in abundance’ (Ps 78: 23-25)

**We open our eyes and our spirits to the wonder of your generosity.**

To feed on wilderness bread and to drink its waters is to feed and drink on Christ whose embodiment and presence is in all things. As an early Christian reflection on the Israelite desert wanderings declares, “... all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ” (1Cor 10:3-4)

**We are hungry and thirsty to find Christ in all the wild places.**

In an age of ecological catastrophe, it is important to remember God’s promise, “I will make the wilderness pools of water, and dry land springs of water. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive trees; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine trees together, so that all may see and know ... it is the hand of the Lord that has done this” (Isa 41:18-20)

**We commit ourselves to work with God in healing and rewilding the earth’s brokenness.**

We conclude our Peacemeal by speaking words of blessing together and to each other:

**May this simple meal nourish you: physically, spiritually, and completely.**

**May the love within this moment inspire you.**

**May you live courageously and joyfully - as someone who is truly free.**

**May hope embrace you.**

**May deep peace transfigure you to live as a beacon of wild hope.**