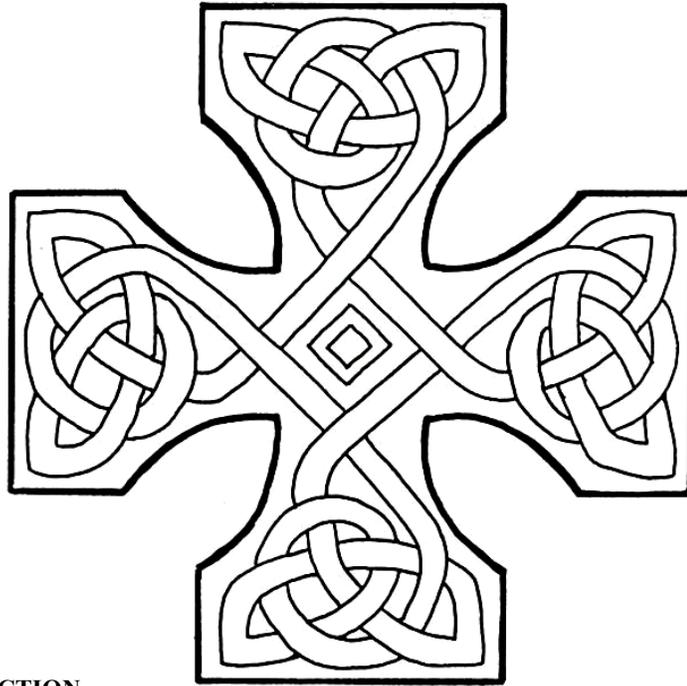




# St. Hilda's Eucharistic Prayer

## Celtic Influences



### INTRODUCTION

St. Hilda's Worship Committee started a pilot project in 2017 to develop a Eucharistic Prayer that reflects the Celtic heritage of our patron Hild of Streonshalh (or her anglicized common reference, Hilda of Whitby). This experimental prayer follows these principles:

1. Trinitarian belief;
2. a deep respect for nature and creation, especially "thinning places;"
3. quiet care for all living things; a wanderlust or migratory nature;
4. love of silence and solitude; praising God through everyday life with great joy;
5. the value of soul friends (Anam Cara) and hospitality;
6. the image of the Wild Goose which is a relatively new expression of the Holy Spirit from the Iona Community.

The prayer was unveiled on the Feast of St. Hilda's in 2017.

Worship Committee has collected feedback and suggestions from parishioners and our Regional Archdeacon. This revised version of the prayer includes explanatory notes at the back to help parishioners better understand the theology and poetry. The Committee welcomes your feedback and hopes this booklet may be useful for your devotion.

*Celebrant* May God be with you.

**PEOPLE** **May God grant us wisdom.**

*Celebrant* Let us lift up our hearts.

**PEOPLE** **We lift our hearts in hope and praise.**

*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to God.

**PEOPLE** **We offer our lives in joy and promises.**

*Celebrant* As we listen to the rhythms of the earth,  
we hear the heartbeat of God  
and we lift our hearts and minds  
in praise and thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup>

We give thanks for the immensity of the firmament  
filled with billions of stars,  
spiralling galaxies, dark matter, and black holes  
- an ever-expanding universe.

We give thanks for our sanctuary- the planet Earth  
where we are blessed with an awareness of your presence  
at every moment of life.<sup>2</sup>

We particularly give thanks  
for transitional in-between times and places,  
thresholds where one thing ends and another begins.  
We thank you for dawn and dusk,  
the time of dying, the cycles of the seasons,  
and natural boundaries and gateways  
where we feel the presence of the One  
who is both the source of all that is and the beyond.<sup>3,4</sup>

Therefore, we join our voices with those of all creation  
in the unending song of praise as we sing:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and  
might. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,  
God of pow'r and might. Heav - en and earth are  
full, full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the  
high - est. Blessed is the one who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the  
high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*Celebrant* We give thanks for the indwelling Spirit in all things.  
She is the fire of inspiration, the creative power of eros,  
the source and sustainer of community,  
the untameable wildness of hope.  
Like the wild goose,  
she is free, uncontrollable, unpredictable,  
and always on the move.  
She disturbs the status quo  
and sets the people into a new adventure of life. <sup>5</sup>

We thank you for our soul friend and wisdom teacher, Jesus.  
A homeless wayfarer, Jesus followed the Spirit  
and sought out the places  
of desert, wilderness and mountaintops  
for prayer, silence and solitude.  
He embraced those precious moments in time  
when the sacred could be seen in the everyday stuff of life;  
in mustard seeds, sparrows and lilies, bread and wine. <sup>6,7</sup>

As a sage, Jesus lived and taught a radical response  
to the systems of domination, money, and power.  
He emphasized the Way,  
serving through ethical action more than ritual observance.  
He overturned the tables of moneychangers in the temple  
and challenged inflexible religious traditions  
with parables of justice, compassion, and non-violence.

Wisdom Teacher, Healer, Companion, Friend and Confessor.  
Jesus is our perfect spiritual guide and true soul friend. <sup>7</sup>

*Celebrant* Jesus died declaring God's forgiveness  
but death did not have the last word.  
Jesus transformed death.  
Through him our eyes were unbound  
so that we need no longer cling to pain  
but may go forward with power  
to release resurrection in the world.  
Love is stronger than death,  
and in God we are not separate.

On the night before he died,  
Jesus gathered his friends for a ritual meal  
celebrating freedom, justice and community.  
During the supper he took some bread,  
recited the blessing, broke it and gave it to his friends saying:  
"Take and eat, this is my body,  
given to you, do this to remember me."

When supper had ended, he took a cup of wine,  
lifted it for a blessing and passed it to his friends saying:  
"Drink this all of you:  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many.  
Do this in memory of me."

Spirit of Life,  
we are grateful for this bread and wine,  
gifts of grain and vine.  
May this bread nourish our capacity for compassion.  
May this cup strengthen our commitment to community.

As Sacred Presence is in all things,  
we are gathered together with every pilgrim  
who seeks refreshment and wisdom in this sacred meal. <sup>8</sup>  
We take with us this day the sure knowledge of Life within  
and Love surrounding us each moment of every day.

*Optional* [We give thanks also for our patron, Hilda of Whitby, especially for her wisdom, her eagerness for learning, her practice of reconciliation, her humility, and showing us how to have a profound reverence for the earth and a sense of solidarity with all its creatures.]

Sacred Presence encircling us.  
May green be the grass we walk on,  
May blue be the skies above us,  
May pure be the joys that surround us,  
May true be the hearts that love us. <sup>8,9</sup>

**PEOPLE Amen**

*Or*

Circle of love, open my heart.  
Circle of wisdom, enlighten my mind.  
Circle of trust, protect my path.  
Circle of healing, grant me new life. <sup>9</sup>

**PEOPLE Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Service continues with the singing of the Lord's Prayer on page 10 of the bulletin.

**Reprinted under OneLicense.net A-721903, All Rights Reserved:**

· *Sanctus* by Richard T Proulx Tune: Deutsche Messe by Schubert; adapt. by Proulx; © 1985, 1989, GIA Publications, Inc.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> **Heartbeat of God** The roots of Celtic Christianity reach deep into the mysticism of St John the evangelist in the New Testament, and the wisdom tradition of the Old Testament. According to Celtic tradition, when St John leaned against Jesus at the Last Supper, he heard the heartbeat of God. Therefore, St John became a symbol of listening for the life of God in ourselves, and in all creation.

<sup>2</sup> **Nature and Creation** The Celtic church celebrated grace and nature as good gifts from God and recognised the sacredness of all creation.

<sup>3</sup> **Liminality** The Celts have long been a people who appreciate the mysterious nature of “in-between,” times and places, the space between where one thing ends and another begins. Transitional periods of any sort are considered sacred because they provide a gap or window into higher dimensions. This can include the time of death. Dusk, Dawn, the time between day and night are seen as points of mystical power, as are holy wells etc. It is believed that in the liminal places is where we can most easily access the wisdom of the spiritual world.

<sup>4</sup> **Thin Places** These are the boundaries between our everyday existence and the reality that we are all part of something so much bigger than ourselves.

**Thin Places** are those precious moments in time when the sacred can be seen in the everyday stuff of life.

<sup>5</sup> **The Wild Goose** Celtic Christians, on the other hand, chose the **Wild Goose** as a way to talk about the Spirit. Celtic Christians often forged their symbols out of the ordinary, daily things of the earth that they saw in front of them. For them, the untamed, uncontrollable, erratic nature of the Wild Goose more closely characterized the movement of the Spirit than did a peaceful, tranquil Dove. A **Wild Goose** is always on the move, always doing unexpected things; it is loud, passionate, sometimes frightening, and certainly unsettling.

Their sense that the Holy Spirit also was the feminine aspect of God brings a certain balance to the Trinity.

Holy Spirit was not a quiet, demure bird, but a loud one, and uncontrollable one, which arrives unexpectedly and wakes the neighbors. It does not submit to human authority. When this spirit calls, you have no choice but to listen, and your life may never be the same.

There is power in the metaphor of the “Wild Goose” — *An Geadh-Glas* — the name in Celtic Christianity for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is, after all, that Person of the Trinity which is the indwelling Spirit in all things, the immanence of the divine in the world itself. She is the balance and compliment to the transcendent God-the-Father. She is the fire of inspiration, the creative power of eros, the source and sustainer of community, the untameable wildness of hope. When we go on a “wild goose chase,” we can feel that we’re going in circles, spiraling silly around that which is elusive and mysterious.

<sup>6</sup> **Spiritual Principles** The Celtic peoples have given us seven enduring spiritual principles:

1. A deep respect of nature, regarding creation as the fifth Gospel.
2. Quiet care for all living things.

3. The love of learning.
4. A wander-lust or migratory nature.
5. Love of silence and solitude.
6. Understanding of time as a sacred reality and an appreciation of ordinary life, worshipping God through everyday life, and with great joy.
7. The value of family and clan affiliation, and especially spiritual ties of **soul friends**.

<sup>7</sup> **Anam Cara** Anam Cara refers to the Celtic spiritual belief of souls connecting and bonding. Your Anam Cara always accepts you as you truly are, holding you in beauty and light. In order to appreciate this relationship, you must first recognize your own inner light and beauty. This is not always easy to do. The Celts believed that forming an Anam Cara friendship would help you to awaken your awareness of your own nature and experience the joys of others.

Anam Cara is someone who encourages a closer walk of relationship with God, who helps you to see your life role.

*In the Celtic tradition, there is a beautiful understanding of love and friendship. One of the fascinating ideas here is the idea of soul love; the old Gaelic term for this is anam cara. Anam is the Gaelic word for soul and cara is the word for friend. So anam cara in the Celtic world was the soul friend. In the early Celtic Church, a person who acted as teacher, companion or spiritual guide was called an anam cara. Anam cara was originally someone to whom you confessed, revealing the hidden intimacies of your life. With the anam cara, you could share your innermost self, your mind and your heart."*

According to John O'Donahue, an accomplished Irish poet, philosopher and Catholic priest, "...You are joined in an ancient and eternal union with humanity that cuts across all barriers of time, convention, philosophy and definition. When you are blessed with an anam cara, the Irish believe, you have arrived at that most sacred place: home."

O'Donahue goes on to say that when Jesus says He calls us friends that He is the anam cara of every individual.

<sup>8</sup> **The "caim"** This was the encircling prayer by which the Celts affirmed the presence of God with them in the circle. In other words, wherever they walked, God was with them, a reminder of God's presence and protection. The Celtic Way is rooted in the Incarnation, the deep awareness of Immanuel, "God with us."

To a Celtic Christian, a circle was a sacred space. It was a replica of the cosmos and symbolized the Celtic belief that time was circular rather than linear. God was the Creator and he inhabited the center of the cosmos and time. This belief carried over into one of their prayer expressions—the *caim* prayer.

<sup>9</sup> **Sacred Presence** The Celtic understanding of God, was that He was always overwhelmingly present all around them. Celtic saint Columbanus said – 'If you want to know the Creator, first get to know the creation.' If there is any one word that would sum up the essence of Celtic Spirituality, it's the word PRESENCE. Awareness of the Sacred Presence at every moment of life, in all places.

