



Eucharistic Prayer

Celtic Influences

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. (1)

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. (2)

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. (3,4)

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

Holy, holy, God of promise and fulfillment. Everything abounds with your grace. Hosanna, hosanna all creation sings. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of God. Hosanna, Hosanna all creation sings.

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. (5)

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. (6,7)

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 (7)

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 is my blood, which is shed for you. 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. (8)

We take with us this day the sure knowledge of Life within and Love surrounding us each moment of every day

(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.) **Optional**

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. (8,9)

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. (9)
Amen

Notes

1) **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.

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

3) **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.

4) **Thin Places** **Thin Place** where 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.

5) **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.

I think 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 untamable 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.

6) **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**.

7) **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'Donohue goes on to say that when Jesus says He calls us friends that He is the anam cara of every individual.

8) **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.

9) **The “caim”** The "**caim**" 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.