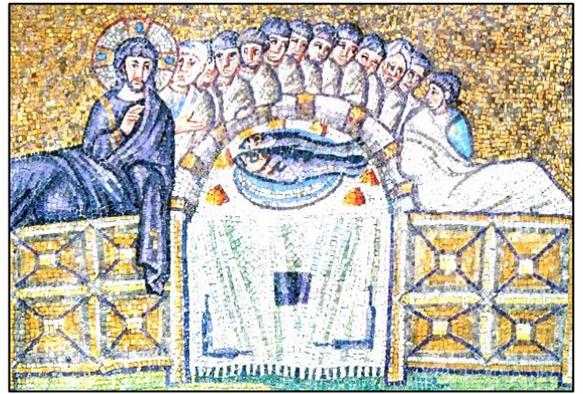


A Blessing on the Beach

Open air picnicking to celebrate the gifts of the sea in the presence of the Risen Lord



These are readings, prayers and hymns from a Blessing on the Beach held at Arnside in Cumbria in 2004 as part of the Loaves & Fishes project organised by the Environment Groups of the Blackburn Anglican Diocese and Churches Together in Cumbria, the Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocese Faith & Justice Commission, Churches Together in Lancashire and CAFOD Lancaster. They can be adapted for any gathering of shared celebration of the gifts of the sea and the joys of an outdoor meal together.

Word of welcome

Hymn

Sung by all

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin, My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord, is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my Word to them, Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord ...

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide, till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them, Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord ...

Silence

In silence together, we ponder the wide and immeasurable sea, the things innumerable which move there, both great and small ...

A reading from the book Genesis (1, 20-22)

God said, 'Let the waters teem with countless living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of heaven.' God then created the great sea-monsters and all living creatures that move and swarm in the waters, according to their kind, and every kind of bird; and God saw that it was good. So he blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and increase, fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds increase on land.'

Psalm (104, 26-33)

Lord how various are your works:
in wisdom you have made them all and the earth is full of your creatures.
There is the wide immeasurable sea:
there move living things innumerable, both great and small.
There go the ships to and fro:
and there is that Leviathan whom you formed to play in the deep.
These all look to you:
to give them their food in due season.
When you give it them, they gather it:
when you open your hand they are satisfied with good things.
When you hide your face they are troubled:
when you take away their breath they die and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit they are created:
and you renew the face of the earth

Song (Music: Jeremy Truslove)

There is the wide immeasurable sea,
There move things numberless, both great
and small.
But what are these among so many?
Loaves and fishes, loaves and fishes,
We can share, both great and small.

Loaves and Fishes

John Rodwell

JT

There is the wide im-meas-u-ra-ble sea There move things
num-ber-less both great and small but what are these a-mong so
ma - ny? Loaves and fi - shes, Loaves and fi - shes,
We can share both great and small

A reading from the Gospel according to John (21, 9-13)

When the disciples came ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish laid on it and some bread. Jesus said, 'Bring some of your catch.' Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to land, full of big fish. A hundred and fifty three of them; and yet, many as they were, the net was not torn. Jesus said, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples dared to ask, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord. Jesus now came up, took the bread, and gave it to them, and the fish in the same way.

Prayers

Spirit of God,
who moved across the face of the deep at the start of time,
the measure of God's creative power;
who moved to make flesh and blood your love for us in Jesus Christ;
Move among us now, that we might give voice to your praise,
be fed by your grace and be made mindful of all who are in need.
All say Amen

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the awesome power of the sea,
the rhythms of its currents and tides,
the creatures great and small with which it teems;
Make us careful in our harvesting of its gifts,
clean in our living on its shores,
wondering always at its beauty and force,
that we might share a future with its bountiful life.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All say Amen.

Almighty God, who lived and worked with us in Jesus Christ:
bless those whose life and livelihood are found around our coasts,
all those who work upon the great waters of the sea,
who make hospitable its shores, who help to keep us safe here and fed;
Move us now to know our neighbours more,
to welcome those who come to make this place their home,
to all who hope for recreation here.
Through Jesus Christ, who died and rose to make all things new.
All say Amen.

Almighty God, who became poor among us
that we might know the riches of your grace:
have mercy for all in need around our shores,
those without home or work; those who will eat poorly today or eat not at all;
those who are famished by drink or drugs; those diminished by illness or grief.
As the tides of life come and go, move us to share what gifts we have with them,
to bring solace and hope, to build communities of love and care.
Through Jesus Christ, who died and rose that we might all be one in him.
All say Amen.

The Blessing

Someone holds up freshly-caught fish and newly-baked bread and everyone holds their picnics aloft.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, Creator of the wide immeasurable sea and living things numberless, both great and small; bless + these your creatures, whose life has been given for our nourishment, that their shimmering beauty may not be lost on us, their own swift swimming give speed to our love. Through Jesus Christ, who called his own disciples to eat together on the shore.
All say Amen.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, you gave your people sustenance in the desert of their wandering and, in Jesus Christ, offer us the bread of life: bless + these loaves, that they may nourish your people and so strengthen them in building your Kingdom. Through Jesus Christ, who reigns here now and for ever. All say Amen.

Note

The Marine Stewardship Council on <https://www.msc.org> provides information on sustainable fish and seafood. For those sensitive to eating fish and seafood, tasty picnics celebrating the sea can be made using samphire, sea purslane and other sea vegetables like various algae, native and imported. You can explore these possibilities on the web, for example at <https://www.raw-foods-diet-center.com>, <https://www2.naturalbalancefoods.co.uk> and <https://www.riverford.co.uk>. These websites and others will also provide information on the safety of seafoods, sometimes now contaminated by pollutants and residues. The pleasures and possibilities of decent bread are promoted by the Real Bread Campaign on <https://www.sustainweb.org>.