

# Harvest Poems and Readings



## Reading 1

The earth is at the same time mother, she is mother of all that is natural, mother of all that is human. She is the mother of all, for contained in her are the seeds of all. The earth of humankind contains all moistness, all verdancy, all germinating power. It is in so many ways fruitful. All creation comes from it. Yet it forms the basic raw material for humankind but also the substance of the incarnation of God's son.

*Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)*

## Reading 2

From George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff, quoted by James George in 'Asking for the Earth', saying that the evolution of humankind is not possible apart from surrounding nature (Season Worship from the Countryside page 127).

## Reading 3

Every thought-seed sown or allowed to fall into the mind, and to take root there, produces its own, blossoming sooner or later into act, and bearing its own fruitage of opportunity and circumstance. Good thoughts bear good fruit and bad thoughts bad fruit. The outer world of circumstances shapes itself to the inner world of thought, and both pleasant and unpleasant external conditions are factors which make for the ultimate good of the individual. As the reaper of [its] own harvest, [humankind] learns both by suffering and bliss. Following the desires, aspirations and thoughts by which one allows oneself to be dominated... a person at last arrives at their fruition and fulfilment in the outer condition of life.

*James Allen from As a Man Thinketh*

## Reading 4

There is no such thing as 'my' bread. All bread is ours and is given to me, to others through me, and to me through others. For not only bread, but all things necessary for sustenance in this life, are given on loan to us with others, and because of others and for others, and to others through us.

*Meister Eckhart (1290-1329)*

## Reading 5

Remember the poor when you look out on the fields you own,  
On your plump cows grazing.  
Remember the poor when you look into your barn,  
At the abundance of your harvest.  
Remember the poor when the wind howls and the rain falls,  
As you sit warm and dry in your house.  
Remember the poor when you eat fine meat  
And drink fine ale at your fine carved table.

The cows have grass to eat;

The rabbits have burrows for shelter;  
The birds have warm nests;  
But the poor have no food except what you feed them,  
No shelter except your house when you welcome them,  
No warmth except your glowing fire.

*Author unknown*

## Reading 6

From 'The Circle of Creation' by John Eaton, recounting the dragonfly laying eggs for the botany teacher, and the blackbird laying her eggs in St. Kevin's hand (Seasonal Worship from the Countryside page 131).

## Harvest Dreams

Tread softly because you tread on farmers' dreams.

Of what does a farmer dream?

In the UK

Of a rich harvest?

Of a good price for the crop, covering costs with something left over?

Of enough capital to see him through the bad times?

Of security - for himself and his family?

Of a good well-managed farm to pass on to his children, as his father passed it to him?

It may be easier to ask 'what does a farmer fear?'

Because fear of failure is ever present!

Fear of too little rain - or too much.

Fear of rain and wind spoiling a good crop.

Fear of low prices for his produce, falling bank balances and an overdraft refused.

Fear of sickness or injury - how will my family cope without me?

And all these apply in the world wide farming community

along with other fears:-

Fear of total crop failure.

Fear of an invasion of locusts, leaving just bare earth where there was a green field.

Fear of drought - lasting for months not just a few weeks.

Fear of 'picky' buyers for the crop - refusal could mean disaster.

Fear of starvation: - no rain, no grass, no cattle, no crop, no sales. Nothing for tomorrow.

And for the 'consumer'?

Do you remember the fuel shortage in September 2000?

Have you ever seen a Supermarket with no food on its shelves?

Our food supply appears secure.

If the buyer does not like one farmer or country he can make a deal elsewhere.

And it is so easy for us with our own 'dream' of cheap food to tread on the dreams of others!

The prophet Isaiah expressed God's indignation when he spoke of 'Grinding the face of the poor' (Is 3:15)

Love for our neighbour can be expressed in treading very softly and carefully in our choice of food.

A wise choice will mean fewer 'food miles', 'Fair Traded' imports

and a fair return for the primary producer where-ever they may be.

An unwise choice can cause irreversible damage to God's world and farmers everywhere.

In buying food - 'Tread softly for you tread on farmers' dreams!'

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## **Bible based readings**

### **From the book of Genesis.**

After he finished the creation the Lord God looked at everything that he had made and said:  
I am pleased. I am very pleased.

When the Lord God made the earth, there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted because he had not sent any rain. The Lord God sent the rain and water came from beneath the surface of the earth, and the ground was watered. Then the Lord God said:

There is no one to till the soil and tend the land

Then the Lord God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live: Then the Lord God took the man and put him in a garden to tend and care for it.

It is good, Very good and I am well pleased.

### **From the Gospel of Matthew:**

Jesus said: "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot"

### **From the Gospel of Mark**

Jesus began to teach beside the Lake Galilee. A great crowd gathered around him and it was so large he got into a boat and sat in it. The people stood on the shore and listened. He taught in parables: and he told this parable: -

Listen! A man went out to sow corn. The first handful of seed I scattered fell on the path. As he scattered the seed the birds of the air came and ate it up. The second handful of seed fell onto rocky ground. Seed falling on rocky ground cannot develop good strong roots. Although some seed would sprout and grow, when the sun shone the plants will wither and die. The third handful of seeds fell among the thorn bushes. Thorns and weeds are strong thriving plants; they are greedy for space and jealous of other plants growing nearby. So when the thorns grew they choked the sprouting corn and it failed to thrive. The fourth handful of seeds fell in good soil. The good soil is well manured, and tilled; the seeds thrive in it. The corn grows strong in the well-tended soil; the warmth of the sun and the softness of the rain is good for it

Thirty grains, sixty grains, a hundred grains. A good yield to enable me to make bread for my family and sell some to pay the bills. Jesus said "The sower worked hard to bring forth good things from the earth to bless his family and his neighbours. The Church can learn from the parable about working to bring people to fullness of life in God."

### **Based on verses from Leviticus 25, 26, 31, Numbers 35, Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5**

The Lord commands, 'The land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord; every seventh day and every seventh year shall be a Sabbath for the Lord; you will neither sow your fields nor prune your vineyard. If you obey my laws and keep my commandments, then I will reward you with rains in their season, and the land shall yield her produce and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And I will give peace in the land. If you remember that the land is sacred and you do not pollute nor defile the land on which you dwell, if you allow your beasts to rest and respect them and your servants, then you will prosper. But if you disobey me and do not allow the land to rest and recover, then I will make your cities into wastelands, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation. The land will also be in desolation and the

people will be scattered in desolate places and among strangers and enemies. Then the land will lie barren and enjoy her Sabbath rest, because you did not allow her to rest whilst you dwelt upon her.'

### **A version of Psalm 65**

God, you deserve our praise,  
because you answer our prayers  
you forgive us when we do wrong  
you bless us with your goodness  
You give hope to people everywhere on earth,

Because you are strong,  
your mighty power put the mountains in place.  
You can silence the roaring waves  
People near and far celebrate and sing because of your love.

You take care of the earth  
and send rain to help the soil grow all kinds of crops.  
Your rivers never run dry,  
and you prepare the earth to produce much grain.  
You water all of its fields and level the lumpy ground.  
You send showers of rain to soften the soil and help the plants sprout.  
Wherever your footsteps touch the earth a rich harvest is gathered.  
Desert pastures blossom, and mountains celebrate.  
Meadows are filled with sheep and goats;  
valleys overflow with grain and echo with joyful songs.



## **Bible References**

Genesis 1:1-10

Genesis 1:20-2:3

Exodus 16:4-15

Deuteronomy 8:7-18

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Psalms 65:9-13

Psalms 67:6

Psalms 104:1-16

Isaiah 55:1-11

Ezekiel 27:1-12

Joel 2:21-27

Micah 4:1-5

Matthew 6:25-33

Mark 6:30-44

Luke 10:25-37

Luke 12:16-30

John 4:7-15

John 6:31-38

Romans 8:18-25

Colossians 3:12-17

Revelation 21:22-22:5