

Grace before meals

Learning from the Aymara

Rebeca is 16 years old and lives in Bolivia. She is Aymaran. In their traditional faith, the Aymara people have a close relationship with *Pachamama* (Mother Earth). One of their rituals is, before any meal, each person drops a tiny bit of their food or drink on the ground as an offering to *Pachamama*. Each person wishes their companions an enjoyable meal and, at the end of the meal, gives thanks for the food.

Parents and school cleaners may not be impressed if you start dropping food on the floor before a meal! But there are other ways to show thankfulness for the food we are receiving. The traditional way for Christians to do this is by saying a prayer—or 'Grace'—before meals.

What four reasons does Pope Francis give for praying Grace before meals?



Pope Francis on Grace before meals

"I ask all believers to return to this beautiful and meaningful custom. That moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life; it strengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation; it acknowledges those who by their labours provide us with these goods; and it reaffirms our solidarity with those in greatest need."

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 227

Write your own Grace, incorporating all four aspects that Pope Francis mentioned. You could even set it to a familiar tune!