

## FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND – THE CAFOD ICON

Christ's outer blue garment signifies the contemplative, yet earthly aspect of his being.

The red garment symbolises Christ born of Mary, through the Holy Spirit.

Over his arm, a striped stole represents the Priesthood of Christ.

Each part of the cross in Christ's halo has one bar on one side and two bars on the other.

The single bar represents his one person as truly God and truly man.

Two bars represent his two natures: fully God and also fully human.

The letters are a shortened form of "I am who I am" - the words God spoke to Moses in the burning bush.

Christ's hands are covered as he offers the loaves and fishes to his Father. This symbolises the Eucharist, and a blessing for the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish.

Peter stands in front of Christ; his hands are also covered, ready to receive the holy offering.

Andrew collects loaves in baskets behind Jesus, while other disciples share the food out among the crowd. "They all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected the scraps left over, twelve baskets full."

The trees, plants and flowers represent the life-giving Spirit that pervades all creation, is present in and fills all things, including the Eucharistic Bread.

The birds, as the psalmist says "look to You to give them their food in due season" - they are ready to feed on the crumbs and sing praises to the Lord!

In icons, mountains represent the Lord's presence. The distant mountain is where Jesus spoke with Elijah and Moses and became transfigured.

***Influenced by Byzantine hymnology we can pray:***

***By your feeding of the five thousand in the desert, grant us a readiness to share the goods you give us.***

***By your strengthening the hungry and giving life to the weary, strengthen us to share your life with others.***

***By your raining down manna in the wilderness for your wandering people, rain down your manna of good will for a fair distribution of food among all peoples.***

***By your giving us life in the Eucharist strengthen us to take and give your life to others and those less fortunate than ourselves.***

***And we give glory, praise and thankfulness for your merciful compassion and care for all peoples of the earth.***

*Prayer and icon by Sr Esther of the Benedictine Community in Turvey, Bedfordshire and donated to CAFOD to support the Hungry for Change campaign.*