

Come and See

Give us today our daily bread

We are bombarded 24/7 by adverts with just one aim - to make us unhappy with what we have. Our relationship with stuff has gone badly wrong, and our greed is destroying this fragile planet.

Six words contain the secret to happiness in a world in crisis – a prayer to shapes our hearts, to make us content with just enough.

Give us today our daily bread. Find out more at oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see.

[Watch online](#) or read the transcript below.

This is my daily bread. I did a lot of baking during the lockdown. I gradually evolved my recipe for these seeded rolls. I bake them in batches over the weekend and most weekdays, if I'm working at home, this will be the basis of lunch. Healthy, delicious and full of fibre.

Jesus gives his disciples a short, deep prayer which we can learn by heart and say every day. It's a prayer we use when we are together – it's sometimes called the Christian family prayer. But it's also a prayer to say by ourselves. Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount that when we pray we should go to our room and shut the door and pray to our Father who is in secret.

A child can say the Lord's Prayer and understand it. But there are layers and layers of meaning in every line. We go on exploring it for the whole of our lives and still find new things.

Our Father in heaven helps us find our place in this vast universe again. Your kingdom come places us in the great story of God's love for the world. Give us today is about how we live. The line is focussed on our relationship with stuff: the stuff we need to stay alive and the stuff we don't. This one line of the prayer – six words - contains the secret of happiness in this world and the key to the global crisis in the climate.

Our relationship with stuff has gone badly wrong and needs to be reset. Many of us if we are honest have a difficult relationship with food and drink. Home drinking increased to dangerous levels during the pandemic. There is a global obesity crisis affecting every age group which is countering the gains made by modern medicine.

We are bombarded 24-7 by the global advertising industry: television, newspapers, online, text messages and posters. All of that money and creativity has one aim: to feed our discontent, to make

us unhappy with what we have so that we will buy the product on offer. I ordered a pizza a few weeks ago from a well known store. The easiest way to order was to sign up for the app. Now every few days I get a text message to my phone encouraging me to order another at 50% off.

We spend more but never enough to escape that cycle. Meanwhile our greed and carelessness has led to the climate emergency and to a crisis in global biodiversity. Human greed is blindly destroying our fragile and beautiful earth.

I wonder if you see how powerful a prayer Jesus has given to us. Give us this day our daily bread is an antidote to greed, a vaccine to combat the disease which is choking the oceans with plastic, filling the rivers with sewage and wreaking havoc on the earth.

For this is a prayer for just enough for each day: for just the bare necessities of life – food and clothing and shelter, and daily bread. The prayer echoes the story of the manna in the wilderness told in the Book of Exodus. God fed the Israelites as they journeyed through the desert with manna which fell from heaven in the night. Every day every family would go out and gather just enough for that day: daily bread.

This is a prayer which sets us free each day from the snares of all of that advertising. It is a prayer which shapes our hearts to be content with just enough, to give thanks for what we have, which sets us free from slavery to things to focus on everything that truly helps us flourish: relationships with God and with others. And note that we are praying for our daily bread not my daily bread. This is a prayer for everyone to have enough – a prayer with justice at its heart.

There are other layers of meaning, of course. Bread is an image of many good things in the Christian tradition. In the story of his temptation, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy: a man or woman does not live by bread alone. Daily bread is a picture of the quiet time every Christian needs alone with God each day in prayer and in reading Scripture to nourish our spirits.

Bread is a reminder of the Eucharist, the service of Holy Communion, when the Church remembers and makes present the death of Jesus: Take, eat this is my body.

Perhaps most powerful of all, we remember that in John's Gospel Jesus says to the crowds, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. When I pray, give us this day our daily bread, I am praying as well for a deeper relationship with Jesus my Lord who teaches me to pray like this.

So much that is wrong in the world could be set right if men and women and children and young people would pray this prayer with understanding each day and live out the prayer in our lives.

Give us this day our daily bread. Amen.