

# *Giving thanks for* **FAIR FOOD**

This is a short reflection and shared prayer that keeps in mind the contribution of farmworkers to the Thanksgiving meal and holds the hope that the current holdouts from the Fair Food Program will join with their peers and their workers for the betterment of U.S. agriculture. Begin the reflection with a tomato accompanying the meal on the dinner table.

## **REFLECTION & THANKSGIVING PRAYER**

By Wesley Snedeker, MDiv Candidate, Chicago Theological Seminary, Class of 2019



The meal that we share today was cultivated by many hands. Its ingredients were plucked from the earth by fingers that are not our own. It was brought to this place by strangers to be prepared as a uniting and nourishing gift to our family.

And so as we gather together to give thanks for what we have, let us also raise up those who have given it to us. Let us be mindful of those whose labor produced these fruits. Let us become knowledgeable about their past and join them in their struggle for freedom. Let us alight in one another the passion for justice that arises in our hearts, and let us harness its power to become people of peace and allies in solidarity.

May we do this in joy as we pray together.

Creator of the ground on which we stand, of the bounty that grows in its soil, and of this community who shares that bounty amongst ourselves, make us thankful for the healing and strengthening power of this meal. Make us agents of change who, through the transforming spirit of peace, may reform a world that would keep food from the mouths of the farmworkers who brought it to this table. Hear us now as we offer ourselves in gratitude for Your love and promise.

[Each person around the table is invited to share what they are thankful for and, if they wish, an experience in which they have faced or helped another face injustice. Others at the table are encouraged to ponder and discuss these offerings as they feel comfortable. When each person has had the opportunity to share, you may conclude with the prayer below.]

Blessed are You, Almighty, who makes possible our pursuit of a just world. May we, in response to Your blessing, answer Your call to stand with those that our society oppresses. Empower us to be strong allies of our nation's farmworkers, encourage us in our solidarity with the people of Immokalee, and enliven us to be witnesses of their oppression to corporations like Wendy's and Publix that resist the invitation of dialogue and fairness. Fill our hearts, bring us peace, make us whole so that we may be Your people. Amen.

## HARVEST PRAYER

By Miriam Grossman, Rabbinical Student,  
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Torah teaches:

Once a year,  
the Israelites marked their journey out of  
Egypt  
by offering up the first fruits of their  
harvest.

They brought up the bounty  
and would declare,  
"In Egypt, we were afflicted with harsh  
bondage.  
And we cried unto G-d, who heard our  
call,  
who saw our suffering and delivered us."  
As if to say, with every harvest we  
remember.  
As if to say, today I am a worker,  
not a slave.

Our ancestors held up barley,  
told a freedom story,  
a bondage-breaking story,  
a "Once we were seen as bodies,  
barely human,  
today we grow food with free hands"  
story.

Today we lift up a just-harvest  
from the fields of Immokalee, Florida.  
Where workers declare  
"We were afflicted."  
Where workers declare  
"Victory!"  
on their own terms.  
Where forced labor and stolen wages  
were the norm



but where a great cry was heard,  
the sound of uprising,  
in meeting and marches.  
Fields pulsing  
with people power.

May we rise  
to join with the workers  
living a freedom story,  
a bondage-breaking story.

Let us lift up the bounty  
Let us answer their call in our time.

And let us bless the Source of Life, the  
fertile earth, and the workers who grew  
and harvested this food. Blessed is the  
cycle of growth and renewal.

*(In the Jewish tradition, this prayer  
could be followed by the traditional  
blessing over bread. Other faith  
traditions might add their own Grace  
before meals.)*

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech  
ha'olam, Hamotzi lechem min haaretz.  
Blessed are you, Source of Life, who  
brings forth bread from the earth.*