



Longer Tables, Lower Fences - Reflections for Lent 2019

Week 6 – 14th April

Written by Sandra Goodwin

Abundant hospitality

Today's photo was taken on Good Friday 2017 in the village of Pucara in the Altiplano region of Bolivia. It shows Chris Thompson with camera in hand sitting alongside Wilson, our interpreter, at a narrow bench which served as the dinner table for ourselves, Bishop Modesto Mamani, Isabella and Nieve, leaders of the Women's Federation. Pictured in the top left hand corner is our host.

Set high in the Andean mountain range, the Altiplano is home to subsistence farmers, from the Aymaran and Quechuan tribes. The farmers had endured the longest ever drought in Bolivia's history prior to our visit and were struggling to cope with very poor crops.

We were served with the traditional Bolivian vegetable and potato soup and were completely taken by surprise when following this our host produced pieces of lamb and plantain. Through our interpreter our host proudly explained that this was his own sheep that had been reared, slaughtered and cooked in honour of our visit. Despite obvious material poverty this community had welcomed us into their midst, invited us to their makeshift table and served us magnificently with abundant hospitality. We were truly blessed.

This week we will be thinking of the events leading up to Easter. We will be thinking of Jerusalem and the Feast of the Passover, the lamb's blood which marked out the homes of the Hebrew people prior to the Exodus. We will be remembering again the significance of the 'Lamb of God', Christ sacrificed for our sake that we might live. We will be remembering that amazing, unconditional love which God extends to all people and the abundant hospitality of God which extends an invitation to all to receive at his table.



To ponder:

- How do I respond to God's invitation, to his abundant hospitality and unconditional love?
- How can I share generous hospitality, how do I go the extra mile and show God's love to others?

Prayer: Generous and all-embracing God, help me to see that it's not what we have or who we are that matters but our attitude to others. Help me to listen patiently without judgement, to give without reserve and to love others as you would have me love. Amen.

Bible link: Luke 22: 17-20 *'And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, "This is my body given for you, do this in remembrance of me."'*

Hymn: Singing the Faith 595 v3 *'When at your table, each time of returning, vows are renewed and our courage restored. May we increasingly glory in learning all that it means to accept you as Lord.'*