

Bread for the World Sunday 2015

**PRAY
ACT
GIVE**

**FOR AN
END TO HUNGER**



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Bread for the World Sunday is an opportunity for your church or community of faith to join thousands of churches across the country in living out God's vision of a world without hunger. Through our prayers for an end to hunger, letters and phone calls to our nation's leaders, and financial support of Bread of the World, your church can give bold witness to God's justice and mercy in the world.

This year, Bread for the World Sunday is scheduled for October 18, but you are welcome to choose another date that works for your church. Your celebration can be as simple as including prayers for hungry people in worship. Or you may wish to devote your sermon, children's message, and other activities to ending hunger in God's world.

Your church or faith community may also want to join others who have made a commitment to ongoing prayer for an end to hunger. Thousands of individuals have already made this commitment to ongoing prayer to support the emerging international movement to end widespread hunger by 2030. On the inside pages, you will find some suggestions for how your congregation might become involved in these prayers for an end to hunger.

On Bread for the World Sunday, we recognize and give thanks for the work of churches, community groups, and denominations as they seek to remove the obstacles that keep people from sharing in God's abundance. We celebrate the diversity of faith traditions across race, ethnicity, and culture that are working together to end hunger. Moved by God's love in Jesus Christ, we reach out in love to our neighbors — and create a better future for all.



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Join us in praying for an end to hunger

Central to Bread for the World's leadership role in the international movement to end hunger by 2030 is engaging churches and individuals in ongoing prayer. By praying for an end to hunger in our world, we participate in God's work of caring for all people in need. We know many Bread for the World members — and the churches in which they worship — pray regularly for those who hunger and for our nation's leaders. We wish to affirm those prayers and invite others to take part in ongoing prayer to end hunger.

The reflection and suggestions below are offered to help you involve your church or community of faith in an outpouring of prayer for an end to hunger.

It is a distinctive feature of Mark's Gospel that Jesus is frequently at prayer. After his acts of healing and feeding — as well as his frequent conflicts with the authorities of his day — Jesus regularly retreats to engage in prayer.

Near the very end of Mark (16:7) is the promise to the disciples that the Risen Christ “is going ahead of you to Galilee” and that they will see him there. That same promise is made to us today. The Risen Christ is present in the Galilee of our lives — in the midst of our challenges and conflicts and in our

efforts to bring about an end to hunger. The Spirit of the Risen Christ enables us to “love our neighbor as ourselves.”

In Matthew 6:5-15, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, “Our Father in heaven, ...Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” In the Gospels, it's clear that God's will is that the hungry are fed, widows are cared for, and the sick are healed.

As we pray today for those who are hungry, sick, or

vulnerable, we continue God's work of healing and feeding. Drawing strength from our prayers, we can challenge the authorities of our day — our elected leaders and others in positions of power — to be compassionate to those in need. As we speak to our nation's decision makers, we intercede for a just society where all enjoy the abundance of God's creation.

Throughout the Scriptures, we see God providing manna in the wilderness, food for widows and orphans, and — in the time of Jesus — a feast for

thousands from two fish and five loaves of bread. Today, in our prayers and as we gather at the table, we are nourished by the Bread of Life.

We invite you to join us in praying for ...

- ... hungry people in our own country and abroad who struggle to get enough to eat and to put food on their tables. They work so hard — against great odds — to feed their families. May God grant them strength and hope.
- ... our nation's decision makers in Congress and the administration. They have the power to change the policies and conditions that allow hunger to persist. May God grant them wisdom and compassion.
- ... churches and organizations that work for justice and mercy in the world. They provide both immediate help and long-term support to enable people to move out of poverty and feed their families. May God grant them a spirit of compassion and courage as they work for the common good.
- ... ourselves. With our votes and our voices, we can influence our elected officials to adopt measures that will lead to an end to hunger. May God grant us persistence and passion in this work.

Commit to ongoing prayer to end hunger

Bread for the World invites both churches and individuals to make a commitment to ongoing prayer by visiting www.bread.org/pray. When you make your commitment, you will then receive an email message every other week with suggested prayers and other resources. You may also request prayer commitment cards to share with your family and friends.

Prayer is not asking.
Prayer is putting
oneself in the
hands of God, at
His disposition,
and listening to His
voice in the depths
of our hearts.

— Mother Teresa

You can encourage your family members and friends to join you in making a commitment to ongoing prayer to end hunger. You can also enlist your church or worshipping community to include these prayers as a part of the weekly worship.

Pray throughout the year

As your church prays for an end to hunger throughout the year, you may wish to focus each week on a particular country or a community in need. Another specific focus for your prayers might be different local, national, and international organizations that offer emergency food and development assistance. Each Friday, Bread for the World's blog includes a prayer for countries around the world.

You may also want to pray for your own representative and your two senators in Congress — as well as other influential members of Congress. Your prayers for those who work in the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development will lift up those who implement many of the programs that touch the lives of millions of people.

Some prefer formal written prayers. Bread for the World's "Daily Prayers for an End to Hunger" can be a starting point. Copies of this pocket-sized resource are available free of charge at www.bread.org/store.

Others are accustomed to spontaneous, extemporaneous prayers — often prompted by Bible passages. You may also wish to commit yourself to reading the Psalms, which has been the "prayer book" for Christians through the ages.

You may find it helpful to begin and end each day with prayers for an end to hunger. Or perhaps you will find yourself praying throughout the day. Martin Luther King, Jr. was noted for his one-sentence prayers, and Saint Francis would pray while he worked.

You pray because Christ is in you. And if that is really happening, then the sort of things you can expect to see developing around you are justice and reconciliation.

— Rowan Williams
104th Archbishop of Canterbury

Prayers can lead to action and giving

You are invited to join Bread for the World members and many others who write, email, phone, and visit their members of Congress. Bread for the World has a remarkable record of helping win passage of bipartisan legislation. As a result of this advocacy, children in the United States receive vital

nutrition. Emergency food reaches refugees from famine and conflict in Africa. Agricultural development is enabling hungry people to grow enough food to feed their families. It takes just a few minutes to write a letter or make a phone call, but the impact is huge.

You can also support these prayers and actions through your financial support of Bread for the World. Your personal gift — or an offering gathered by your congregation — will enable Bread for the World to involve others in this hopeful effort. We offer training to young people, arrange for church leaders to meet with members of Congress, and make the case in the media that we can end hunger in our lifetime.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

— 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Additional resources for Bible study, preaching, and worship — including those with African American themes — can be found at bread.org/sunday. Spanish-language resources can be found at www.bread.org/domingo.

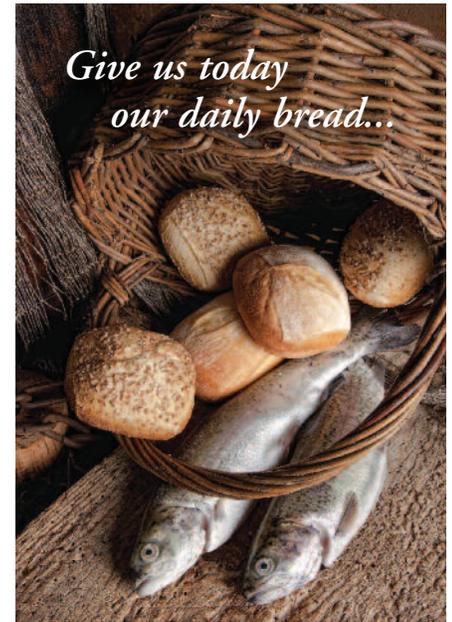


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How Your Church Can Celebrate Bread for the World Sunday

1 If you haven't already done so, identify a Sunday or weekend when you will observe Bread for the World Sunday. Announce the date in your church newsletter, weekly email, or on social media. Make sure you've ordered resources needed for your celebration in advance. Worship bulletin inserts, offering envelopes and a Bread for the World Sunday poster (which you can display in an entry way or another area where people gather) can be ordered at www.bread.org/sunday.

2 Plan which elements in your worship service will address hunger. Perhaps a special announcement at the beginning of the service or an opening prayer. The sermon might address hunger and the response of faith. Lectionary studies and other preaching helps from Bread for the World may be useful. Many churches have a "mission moment" before the offering or collection. Is there a role for children to play in the service?

Prayers for the day are an ideal way to observe Bread for the World Sunday. Use the enclosed responsive prayer or have members contribute their own prayers for an end to hunger. Prayers and other worship resources can be downloaded at www.bread.org/sunday.

If it's not your congregation's regular practice, one or more individuals could bake loaves of bread for the Eucharist or communion — with a special prayer that remembers those who struggle to get their daily bread.

3 Devote a Bible study or adult forum to the Christian response to hunger. You might want to invite a guest from a community feeding program, a

school lunch administrator, or someone who has immigrated from a country where hunger is acute. You can order or download resources designed for youth and adult Christian education at www.bread.org/store.

4 As part of your Bread for the World Sunday celebration, you may want to conduct an Offering of Letters before or after the worship service — taking time to write brief letters to members of Congress. In the fall of 2015, Congress must reauthorize our nation's child nutrition programs — including school meals and other programs that are vital for U.S. children facing hunger. Congress is also considering the Global Food Security Act, which would support smallholder farmers in developing countries. For resources for letter-writing, visit www.bread.org/ol.

5 Gather a special offering or collection. You may wish to allocate the funds to a denominational hunger program, a local feeding program, and Bread for the World. You may order offering or pew envelopes at www.bread.org/sunday. Some churches organize a bake sale — with loaves of bread — as a way to raise funds.

6 Plan now to send members of your church to Washington, DC, for Bread for the World's national gathering and annual Lobby Day in early June 2016. This is a life-changing opportunity to join others in worship, learning, and speaking to our nation's decision makers about making the end of hunger a national priority.

About Bread for the World

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. God's grace in Jesus Christ moves us to reach out to our neighbors — whether they live next door, in another state, or on another continent.

The individuals and churches involved in Bread for the World represent a broad range of Christian faith traditions. We embrace and reflect the growing diversity of culture, ethnicity, and religious practices.

Bread for the World's work is made possible by contributions from tens of thousands of individuals and thousands of churches across the country. We invite you to join us by visiting www.bread.org/join or calling 800-822-7323.



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A New Rhythm: Power Poured Out for the World

Commentary on Mark 10:35-45
By Dr. Brian Bantum

“Can we sit on your right hand and your left?” What were James and John thinking? Certainly they must have known their request was asking Jesus to choose – to make an impossible choice, if not an inappropriate one. How could they have not known that their friends and co-workers would be less than thrilled to hear that they were seeking the eternal preference of Jesus? What were they thinking?

But maybe it is not so difficult to imagine two men, from modest or less than modest means, who desired the small amount of power they found in walking with Jesus to remain forever. They were walking alongside a

teacher whose name preceded them wherever they went, whose very presence gathered crowds. Who would not want to maintain some of that security, power, and prestige that they had begun to feel walking with Jesus each day?

I wonder, though, how often the blessings that come upon us become temptations. How often do we cling to the aspects of our lives that have come to help us feel less vulnerable or more seen in the world?

In the ensuing argument among James and John and their 10 friends (are the other 10 angry with their friends’ betrayal or because they were thinking the same thing themselves?) Jesus calls to all of them with a strong rebuke, “but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Power is a subtle thing. It accumulates, slowly turning what was once abundance and “more than” into necessity — into a life whose bounds of fullness and lack expand until it is not enough to have been numbered among the 12, to have been called out of thousands by name. No, we need to be *first* on the right and left hand. We need the certainty that we will be seen, that we will be safe.

Perhaps this is not only the case with our individual lives, but our corporate and national lives as well. Our power (economic, military, political) is garnered to protect what we have accumulated. The United States’ military budget dwarfs budgets for food, education, and healthcare. What are we protecting?

Not to be served, but to serve – Jesus calls into the lives of those he has called by name. He calls into these people whom he has empowered with his presence. However, this power is not to be maintained, but poured out. The authority the disciples glean from their association with Jesus is not for them to ensure that their power endures forever.

Jesus’ words to his beloved disciples are a call to see the one who has called them – the Son of Man who does not seek to be served, but to serve. Our power, our wholeness is not a status to be attained and secured. Our power is the presence of the eternal one whose life is perpetually broken and poured into ours. He draws our lives into the gravity of his love to be spun out again into the dark places where tyrants rule, consuming all things for their own benefit.

Jesus sends us to resist the patterns of this world where letting others go hungry and uneducated for the sake of our perceived safety is not a mark of our fidelity, but of our blindness. We are no longer those old creatures ruled by the rhythms of an unredeemed world. Jesus’ words call us, instead, to display a holy rhythm, a new song where our lives are extensions of God’s justice and mercy in the world.

Dr. Brian Bantum is Associate Professor of Theology at Seattle Pacific University. He is the author of Redeeming Mulatto: A Theology of Race and Christian Hybridity (Baylor University Press, 2010) as well as numerous articles on race, identity, and the church.



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A Litany for Bread for the World Sunday

Oh God, we give thanks for this community, for the church around the world, and for all those who attend to your people. May the church continue to grow in your love and grace. In Jesus' name we pray,

Lord, hear our prayer.

James and John assured Jesus that they were willing to drink the cup he drank, and be baptized with his baptism. We pray, O God, that we too will be able to bear whatever suffering is required to be your disciples, and that we always remember we are here not to be served but to serve. In Jesus' name we pray,

Lord, hear our prayer.

Compassionate God, too many in our world suffer greatly from hunger, illness, homelessness. We know you are with them. Help us to be with them, too, through advocacy, solidarity, and direct connection. In Jesus' name we pray,

Lord, hear our prayer.

Merciful God, so many of your children experience violence and despair. Too many live in war zones, in places far from here but also quite often in our own backyards. We pray that we can be instruments of your peace. May our commitment to love and justice for each person provide a balm for the wounds of hatred and fear. In Jesus' name we pray,

Lord, hear our prayer.

We give thanks, O God, for your gift of the Earth, for its water, its soil, its animals, insects, and birds. We ask forgiveness for the many ways we ignore the preciousness of this gift. Give us the necessary strength to live in right relationship with the Earth and its offerings. In Jesus' name we pray,

Lord, hear our prayer.

Your presence, God, is often found on the margins, with those whom the world has discarded. Remind us to continue to seek you there, to immerse ourselves in the edges, where hope and faith in you are most strong. In Jesus' name we pray,

Lord, hear our prayer.

Creator God, you formed us from ashes and breathed life into our bodies. Let us always be mindful of the gift of life and remain grateful for the ways you walk with us. In Jesus' name we pray,

Lord, hear our prayer.

This responsive prayer was composed by Judy Coode, director of communications for the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns. She is a contributing writer for Sojourners and an editor and writer of the A Maryknoll Liturgical Year series.



Bulletin or Pulpit Announcement

Today we join with churches across the country to observe Bread for the World Sunday. Moved by God's grace in Jesus Christ, we pray for all of those who suffer from hunger and want, and we rededicate ourselves to ending hunger in God's world.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you have given us the inheritance of new life in Jesus Christ. May your grace move us to assure that the abundance of your creation is used to overcome hunger and poverty in our world.
Amen.

Prayer Before or After Communion

O God, our provider, you nourish us with holy food and drink, and you open our hearts to the needs of others. Refresh us with your Spirit, so we might proclaim your loving kindness and share your abundance with all in need, as we feast on Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life.
Amen.

Benediction

May the God of love, who loves us freely, strengthen us in our love for others; may Jesus Christ, who is the true bread from heaven, grant us grace to speak out for those who have no voice; may the Spirit, who dwells in us, empower us to go out into the world to work for change, bringing God's justice and hope to all. *Amen.*