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IT IS AN ACT OF LOVE TO:

# Feed the Hungry

Gather

## OPENING PRAYER

As we gather together, we pray for those who face this day hungry; those who will perish this day due to the lack of food; those who will suffer this day due to malnutrition; those who struggle to feed themselves and their families. Inspire us, Lord, to discern wisely the causes of hunger, to judge rightly the way to conquer the challenge of hunger, and to act boldly to combat hunger around us and in our world. Lord, make us instruments of your peace and love to those who hunger this day. Amen.

Report on Actions

Scripture Reflection

And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And all ate and were filled; and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

*-Mark 6:32-44*

-What happens in this passage in addition to attending to the physical hunger of the crowd?

-What happens when you sit down to a meal with your family beyond the satisfaction of physical hunger?

## SOCIAL INQUIRY

### Introduction

Hunger is a pervasive problem in today's world, imperiling especially the lives of the young, the old, and the infirm. Given the breadth of the problem and its connection to poverty and inequality, addressing it can seem as overwhelming to us today as feeding a crowd of 5,000 with five loaves and two fish did to the disciples. However, like the disciples, we are called to action.

In the world today, there is enough food for everyone to have the nourishment necessary for a healthy and productive life. The problem is that not everyone has equal access to this food. Obviously, we can't just distribute the world's global food production equally between individuals – but examining and implementing ways to ensure access to food, and to increase and sustain agricultural production are essential for the problem of hunger to be minimized.

The following are statistics on world hunger from [worldhunger.org](http://worldhunger.org) and the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that about 795 million people of the 7.3 billion people in the world, or one in nine, were suffering from chronic undernourishment in 2014-2016. Almost all the hungry people, 780 million, live in developing countries, representing 12.9 percent, or one in eight, of the population of developing countries. There are 11 million people undernourished in developed countries. The causes of hunger are listed as: poverty, harmful economic systems, conflict, food and agricultural policy, population, and climate change. (FAO,

The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015 p.8, qtd. In World Hunger Fact Sheet, November 25, 2015

There are two basic types of malnutrition/undernutrition. The first is protein-energy malnutrition which is the more lethal form of malnutrition/hunger and is the type of malnutrition that is referred to when world hunger is discussed. The second type of malnutrition is vitamin and mineral deficiency - not the type of malnutrition that is referred to when world hunger is discussed, but also a very serious problem. (Black et al qtd. In World Hunger Fact Sheet, November 25, 2015)

Children are the most visible victims of undernutrition. Studies estimate that undernutrition is the cause of approximately 3 million child deaths annually or 45% of all child deaths. Undernutrition magnifies the effect of every disease, including measles and malaria. The estimated proportions of deaths in which undernutrition is an underlying cause are roughly similar for diarrhea, malaria, pneumonia, and measles. Malnutrition can also be caused by diseases, such as the diseases that cause diarrhea, by reducing the body's ability to convert food into usable nutrients. (World Hunger Fact Sheet, November 25, 2015)

On July 25, 2013 Pope Francis visited and addressed the Community at Varginha, one of Rio de Janeiro's favelas, or Shantytowns. This was probably one of the most touching papal visits yet as he spoke to the people there: "When we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them—some food, a place in our homes, our time—not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched. I am well aware that when someone needing food knocks at your door, you always find a way of sharing food; as the proverb says, one can always 'add more water to the beans'! Is it possible to add more water to the beans?...Always?...And you do so with love, demonstrating that true riches consist not in material things, but in the heart!"

## Observe

1. Research and share statistics regarding hunger in your community. Who is hungry? Why do they not have enough food?
2. What services and programs are available in your community to feed the hungry? Share any stories about creative ways this need is being met.
3. What is being done in your community to address the causes of hunger?

4. Research organizations which confront the issue of world hunger such as Bread for the World and Catholic Relief Services' Operation Rice Bowl. How do they address the causes and consequences of a lack of adequate food?

### Judge

1. What is your responsibility to those who are hungry?
2. How can this responsibility be better met in your family, community, and in the world?
3. What connections are there between sharing the Eucharist and sharing food?
4. What does trust in God have to do with feeding the hungry?

### Act

1. As a family or group, adopt a family that is struggling to put food on the table and deliver a meal or food to the family.
2. Volunteer at a local soup kitchen or food bank. If there are none in your community and the need exists, work with others to meet this need.
3. Contribute your time, talent, and treasure to the work of a national or international organization which is responding to the challenge to feed the hungry.
4. Reflect on the ways you serve the needs of those in your life who are hungry, and resolve to do these small things with great love. Reflect on the ways your hunger is met and accept these gifts with gratitude.

### **Status Update**

“@cfmact It is an act of love to feed the hungry” #ChristianFamilyMovement

### Look Ahead to the Next Meeting

1. Date \_\_\_\_\_

2. Time \_\_\_\_\_

3. Place
4. Phone or e-mail host if you cannot attend
5. Look ahead to the Observe section for the next meeting.
6. Who could we invite to join our group?

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Pray the Lord's Prayer with particular emphasis on our petition to "give us this day our daily bread."