

Eucharistic reflection: The Bread of Life

Duration of activity: 15 minutes.

What you will need:

- » Five or six different types of bread from around the world: baguette, sliced bread, rye bread, a bagel, naan bread, tortillas, chapati, etc.
- » A basket for the breads.
- » Volunteers to bring each type of bread to the altar or table at the front. Invite youth, new members of the congregation, a grandparent and grandchild, a parent and child, and/or others to be part of the procession.

Instructions: A narrator should read the text slowly, with a pause between each section, while each volunteer brings in a different type of bread and places it in the basket. Alternatively, one person can begin the reflection, and then each volunteer brings one of the breads to the front, and reads a section.

Readings:

Section 1:

At the Last Supper, Jesus broke unleavened bread and shared it with his apostles. Bread takes many forms, but it is a staple food of many people around the world. Whether it is unleavened flatbread, as Jesus would have eaten in Jerusalem in his time, or familiar sliced white bread, bread is a meaningful part of our lives and our cultures.

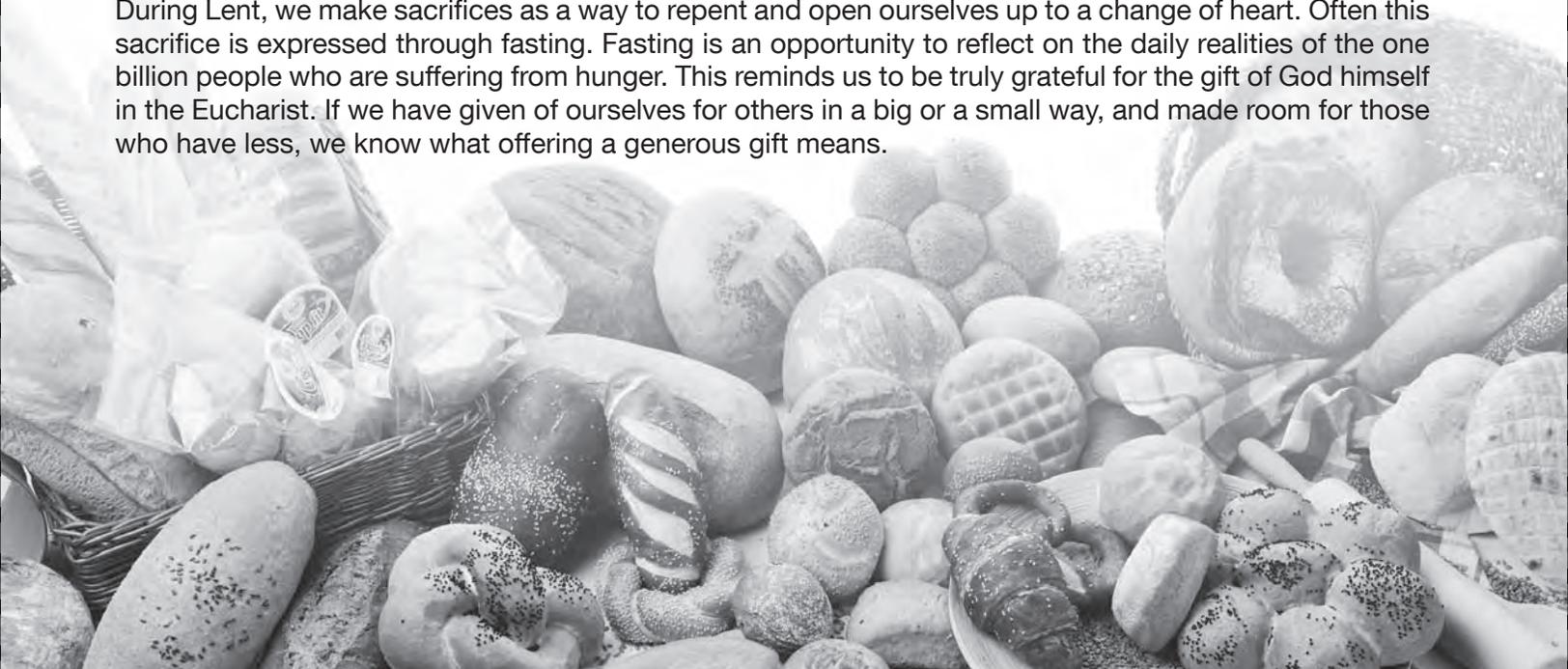
Section 2:

When we receive the bread during the Eucharist, we make a commitment to be in communion with the whole body of Christ. There is room for everyone at this divine banquet with God.

Here in Canada, most of us have access to enough food to nourish our bodies. However, what does it mean to us that 1 in 8 people around the world do not have adequate food to eat? Their daily bread is a daily struggle, and they never know what the next day will bring.

Section 3:

During Lent, we make sacrifices as a way to repent and open ourselves up to a change of heart. Often this sacrifice is expressed through fasting. Fasting is an opportunity to reflect on the daily realities of the one billion people who are suffering from hunger. This reminds us to be truly grateful for the gift of God himself in the Eucharist. If we have given of ourselves for others in a big or a small way, and made room for those who have less, we know what offering a generous gift means.



Section 4:

At Mass, we receive a small piece of consecrated bread or a sip of consecrated wine, which is the gift of life from Jesus. Inspired by Jesus' gift to us, we can make room at the table for the poor and the hungry. As he gave of his body, we too can share bread with our brothers and sisters in the Global South.

Very Reverend Pedro Arrupe, S.J. told us, "If there is hunger anywhere in the world, then our celebration of the Eucharist is somehow incomplete everywhere in the world . . . In the Eucharist we receive Christ hungering in the world. He comes to us, not alone, but with the poor, the oppressed, the starving of the Earth. Through him they are looking to us for help, for justice, for love expressed in action. Therefore we cannot properly receive the Bread of Life unless at the same time we give the Bread of Life to those in need, wherever and whoever they may be."

Section 5:

God created an abundant world, with enough for everyone. But the way that food is grown, sold and shared – whether through local or global food systems – isn't working for one billion people. DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE is working to respond to this challenge, by addressing the root causes of poverty and injustice.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis sends us this call: "I invite all of the institutions of the world, the Church, each of us, as one single human family, to give a voice to all of those who suffer silently from hunger, so that this voice becomes a roar which can shake the world."

Section 6:

By supporting DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, we join a movement that is working to create a world where there is justice for all and where people come first. By creating seed banks for farmers to make crops last longer, supporting farming and fishing cooperatives, or speaking out against land grabs or forest destruction, we can make the world more just, to ensure that everyone can have their daily bread.

Let us pray:

God our Father,
We give you thanks
for the abundance of your creation,
and the generosity of your gifts.
We are sorry that amongst us
are so many people
who are excluded from the feast,
prepared by you for us all.
May your Spirit inspire us and lead us
as we seek change,
so that hunger and poverty
are no longer
a scar and a scandal in our world.
May your Spirit guide us
as we seek change,
so everybody has enough food to flourish
and a place at the table you spread for all.

(Prayer: Catherine Gorman/CAFOD)

