

## A Scandal of Hunger in a World of Plenty

"If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26)

"No one in the family is healthy. All are weak... Already four of my children died directly or indirectly because of food. I could not take proper care of myself during pregnancy and that took the lives of my children."

(Sabita Yadov, Beneficiary of CRS in Orissa, India)

### **A Christian Response to World Hunger** (Fr. Stephen Rehrauer, C.Ss.R.)

Human life is a fragile gift, much more fragile than we care to admit. Despite the inspiring stories of rare individuals who are forced to endure severe adversities and manage to survive, the more common reality of human experience corresponds to the Rule of Threes: the average human being can survive only three minutes without air, three hours in severe conditions without shelter, three days without water, three weeks without food, three months without hope.

### **Food is a Human Right**

The right to life is meaningless if the right to things necessary for life's preservation and full development are not also guaranteed. All people everywhere have a right to food and potable water, to clean air, shelter, and a right to hope for the future. The pro-life stance of our Church carries with it the obligation to feed the hungry. To be truly pro-life means to recognize the oral right of all people to food, to work to eliminate the scourge of hunger from human society, and to tangibly and concretely offer hope to those who have little to no hope for their future.

*"Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, he has the right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood."*

(Pope John XXIII, 1963, Pacem in Terris, # 11)

### **Food is a Gift from God**

Food also has a sacred quality. Food is life. Food is a gift to us from God. Jesus himself chose bread as the matter for the sacrament of the Eucharist, which binds his life to our own. The first Apostles, having known the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread, fed the hungry as a primary aspect of their ministry.

### **Food is a Right Denied and a Gift Withheld**

Despite the generosity and efforts of so many goodhearted and right-minded people, and despite the many great scientific and technological advances in communication, agricultural production, transportation, political organization, and so forth, and despite the best-laid plans and efforts of multinational organizations, millions of people still suffer daily from chronic hunger.

*The question of equitable agrarian reform in developing countries should not be ignored. The right to food, like the right to water, has an important place within the pursuit of other rights, beginning with the fundamental right to life. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a public conscience that considers food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination.*

(Pope Benedict XVI, 2009, Caritas In Veritate, # 27)

## **God is at Work in Human Hunger**

In facing a human tragedy, the Christian should first ask what God is doing. Choices and actions of followers of Christ should be responses not to situations or selves, but to the activity of God in the world events around us. Any question about what we should do must be preceded by the question about what God is doing. That insight may serve us well today in dealing with the reality of world hunger.

## **What are we called to do? The Corporal Works of Mercy**

“Everyone is obliged to perform the works of mercy, according to his own ability and the need of his neighbor. We must remember, too, that our neighbor is everyone...” (St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism, # 193)

1. **To feed the hungry:** “Everyone needs bodily food. It is an act of love to help others to obtain their bodily nourishment, especially those in greatest need.” (St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism, # 191)
2. To give drink to the thirsty
3. To clothe the naked
4. To visit the imprisoned
5. To shelter the homeless
6. To visit the sick
7. To bury the dead

To get involved in the Corporal Works of Mercy:

Check the ‘Social Concerns’ page on St. Mary’s Catholic Center website ([www.aggiecatholic.org/index.cfm?load=page&page=143](http://www.aggiecatholic.org/index.cfm?load=page&page=143)) and go to the different social ministries offered in the parish ([www.aggiecatholic.org/index.cfm?load=page&page=776](http://www.aggiecatholic.org/index.cfm?load=page&page=776)):

*The Social Ministry Commission:*

The mission of the Social Ministry Commission is to help raise awareness and educate members of St. Mary’s about Catholic Social Teaching.

Activities: Work of Human Hands Sale, Social Justice Bible/Study Group, monthly newsletter Matthew 25, Sunday for the Poor drives.

Meetings: 6:30-8:00 PM, 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month

Contact: Gerry Hince, [StMarySocialMinistryCommission@gmail.com](mailto:StMarySocialMinistryCommission@gmail.com)

*ASAP Aggies Serving Another Person (ASAP)*

ASAP connects the students of St. Mary’s with the Bryan/College Station community through services to others. This organization is a window into the Social catholic Teaching of the Church.

Currently the groups offer services with Habitat for Humanity, Millican nursing home, Twin City Mission soup kitchen and the St. Vincent de Paul Store. The group also organized a 5K fundraising event for the St. Vincent de Paul Society in April.

Meetings: Service projects available almost every weekend. Weekly meetings alternating leadership meetings, socials and education/project activities

Contact: [ASAPvolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:ASAPvolunteer@gmail.com)

#### *Jail Ministry*

A small group of permanent parishioners and students visits alternatively the Brazos County maximum security jail and the Sandy Point minimum security jail on Sunday to offer prayer services, usually meeting at 7:45 AM at St. Mary's and been back at 10:30 AM.

There is a mandatory *training* offered regularly for the area and background check and clearance are necessary before being able to go.

Contact: [dreed@aggiecatholic.org](mailto:dreed@aggiecatholic.org)

#### *SMAPL (St. Mary's Aggies Promoting Life)*

SMAPL seeks to connect our parish with the Church's mission to instill respect for human life at all stages from conception to natural death.

Activities include Pro-Life Masses, 40 Days for Life, Prayer Vigils outside the Bryan Planned Parenthood, Rosaries for Mercy, and Pro-Life speakers and workshops, as well as drives to collect baby items for families in need for the Good Samaritan Gabriel Project Life Center, participation in the annual baby bank collection and angel tree, and letter-writing campaigns.

Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm in Rm. 203

Contact: [AggieCatholicSmapl@Gmail.com](mailto:AggieCatholicSmapl@Gmail.com)

#### *Mission Trips Spring Break/ Service Trips*

Every year, a group of Aggie Catholics give up their Spring Break to do service work. In the past, we have gone to New Orleans, Galveston, and Honduras. A Christmas break trip to Arteaga, Mexico is also possible. This is a great way to give your time to Christ by lifting up his mystical body.

Meetings: as needed

Contact: [rcadena@aggiecatholic.org](mailto:rcadena@aggiecatholic.org)

During the semester St. Mary's organizes a few daylong service trips to Down Home Ranch in Elgin, TX, and Casa Juan Diego, a Catholic Worker House, in Houston TX.

Contact: [cpichon@aggiecatholic.org](mailto:cpichon@aggiecatholic.org)

#### *St. Vincent de Paul Society*

The St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVdP) is part of an international Catholic lay organization dedicated to offering person-to-person assistance in relieving the need and suffering of individuals and families in our communities in a spirit of compassion and solidarity. The Bryan-College Station Conference comprises members from the five local Catholic parishes, including St. Mary's.

Services include food and clothing assistance, financial assistance with rent, utilities, prescription drugs or transportation, and Disaster assistance

The Conference runs also a thrift store in Bryan, the SVdP Store, where people in the community can buy at very low price clothing and household items.

Meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:00 PM at St. Thomas Aquinas in College Station and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at St. Joseph's in Bryan.

Contact: [cpichon@aggiecatholic.org](mailto:cpichon@aggiecatholic.org) or [svdp.bryan@verizon.net](mailto:svdp.bryan@verizon.net)

## Scripture references

“If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like the midday; Then the Lord will guide you always and give you plenty on the parched land. He will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails.” - *Isaiah 58:10-11*

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” - *Matthew 25:41-46*

“Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.” – *Luke 3:11*

“If a brother and sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works is dead.” - *James 2:15-17*

“If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.” - *1 John 3:17-18*

## References for further reading

- Catechism of the Catholic Church: [www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/ INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM)
- A Christian Response to World Hunger by Fr. Stephen Rehrauer, C.Ss.R., 2009
- The New Catholic Answer Bible
- St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism

## Prayer for the End of Hunger by *Education for Justice*

Sharing the loaves and fishes,  
You gave us an image of solidarity with the hungry, O Lord.  
Sharing yourself in the Bread and Wine,  
You called all to the table, O Lord.  
Give me the hunger to be a part of the feeding  
And the healing of this world.  
Nourish me with your Grace,  
So I may work with joy to serve your children.  
Open my eyes and my heart  
To recognize those in poverty  
And increase my awareness  
Of the structures and systems  
That need to be changed  
So we may all break bread together.  
In your name we pray for the end of hunger.  
Amen.