

PRAYER
ECUMENICAL CENTRE CHAPEL
Wednesday, 19 October 2016
Churches' Week of Action on Food

*This service of common prayer celebrates the Churches' Week of Action on Food.
Theme for the day: Commandment 5. Do not waste food.
Adopted from Advocacy Tools for Congregations accompanies the Ten Commandments of Food.
In the Ecumenical prayer cycle, this week we pray for Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.*

Opening Responses

Leader: Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Leader: Heavenly Lord, Comforter;
We come to you, hungry and thirsty for righteousness.

**All: Come and dwell in us.
Satisfy us so that we might offer
hospitality, food and rest
to the hungry and weary.**

Sung Response: For the fruits of all creation or other hymn

Reading: John 6: 11- 13.

Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.

Reflection

According to the Bible, food has a profoundly sacred role. It is a gift from God. Apart from the physical role food has in providing substance and strength to live; sharing and partaking of food has a socially binding and building role in strengthening relationships among the children of God. Food also has a paramount spiritual role in the celebration of the Eucharist and reaffirming our relationship with God. The little boy's contribution of five barley loaves and two fish indicates the importance of sharing what we have, and the significance of each person's contribution (v.9) notwithstanding one's age, gender or status.

Jesus's initiative of feeding the 5,000 people and the collection of the 12 baskets of fragments of the barley loaves (vv. 5-13) is seen by the people as a sign that Jesus is representing God (vv. 14). We understand that God gives bread from heaven (v.32), sends and commissions Jesus to

give lasting life (v.37), drawing people to him, teaching, feeding them with the living bread (vv. 39, 44, 65). The abundance and surplus provided by the sign 'on the mountain' (v.3) remind us of the messianic banquet on God's mountain anticipated by Prophet Isaiah (Isa 2: 2,3; 25:6). The "twelve baskets full" symbolically could represent abundance and blessing for the work of the 12 apostles or indicate that the 12 tribes of Israel would never be in want.

Food in Christianity is not just a commodity or a product. It is both physical and spiritual. It is a sacred gift from God. A gift to be relished, shared, and not to be wasted.

But today, one-third of food produced for human consumption is wasted globally. This amounts to about 1.3 billion tonnes per year. In medium and high-income countries, food is discarded even if it is still suitable for human consumption. In low-income countries, food is lost mostly during the early and middle stages of the food supply chain.

Confession and renewal

Leader: O Lord, you bless us with food to sustain us;

All: Thank you, Lord!

Leader: Food is denied to many in this unjust world, with poverty in the midst of plenty;

All: Open our eyes Lord!

Leader: O Lord, help us to understand the ways in which food is being wasted;

All: Open our minds Lord!

Leader: Help us to find ways to prevent wastage of food in our own context and to help with situations far and wide;

All: Open our hearts and hands to conserve, reach out and to work together!

Intercession

In the Ecumenical prayer cycle, this week we pray for Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

Leader: For the beauty of the mountains, rivers, the delta and forests;

All: We thank you, Lord!

Leader: For all who work for conserving the environment and work to overcome the impact of climate change;

All: We thank you, Lord!

Leader: For people and churches in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, and their service to people and their accompaniment of communities to live full and resilient lives;

All: We thank you, Lord!

Leader: We pray for peace amongst peoples.

All: We pray for abundant harvests that all can benefit from.

Leader: We pray for protection of people from natural disasters.

All: We pray for justice for all, including farmers, workers minority communities and women.

The Lord's Prayer (in one's own language)

Song – Until all are fed or other hymn

Prayer of commitment

Leader: May we always be hungry for righteousness;

All: Overcome injustices that brings about hunger!

Leader: May we always be hungry for peace;

All: Overcome insecurity, suffering and displacement!

Leader: May we always yearn to care for each other and the environment;

All: The earth will remain abundant for all creation!

Amen.

Sharing the sign of Peace