

AUGUST *God's Leaders are Fed*

Read Exodus 16:13–35, Matthew 25:24–29, and John 6:35. What similarities do you note?

ELCA World Hunger information tells us that in developing countries in the world—

852 million people are hungry

815 million people are undernourished

1.2 billion people live on less than \$1/day

153 million children under age 5 are underweight

11 million children under age 5 die every year, over

half of these deaths are from hunger-related causes

1 in 6 people is hungry

1 in 4 people lacks safe drinking water

Our reaction might well be one of shame, since, while so many struggle for daily bread, most of us have so much. Or we might react in thanksgiving that we are among the blessed who have a full table every day.

God is a bread provider; we are bread sharers. God cared for the Israelites in the wilderness with a gift they did not even understand. They called it “manna”—meaning “What is it?” God provided then and continues to provide today. We receive the gift of daily bread and share with those who are in need.

In addition to physical hunger, we may also experience spiritual hunger. We feel lost, empty. God seems far off and the way ahead looks gloomy. As when we are physically hungry, when we are spiritually starving we need to be fed. God finds us in our spiritual need and fills that need with the only bread that can take care of our spiritual hunger and restore us, the bread of life—Jesus himself.

For reflection and discussion

When have you been spiritually hungry? What filled you then? When have you shared bread with someone? What did that experience mean to you?

The bread and wine that we receive at the altar may seem like something less than spectacular. Certainly we don't ask, “What is it?” We know what we receive. We receive nothing other than Jesus himself, for our spiritual food. Our soul is restored. The free gift is there for us and we receive it remembering what Jesus has given for us. “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

We live in a world of spiritually hungry people. They wander and search, seeking to fill the emptiness inside. We owe these seekers the same thing we owe those who are physically hungry. God provides bread, both physical and spiritual. We are called to share both.

Jesus said and continues to say, “You did not choose me but I chose you. . . .” (John 15:16) As God's chosen ones, our task, our challenge, our joy is to share our gifted bread with those in need. God gives life—we are the sharers of that life.



Prayer

Lord, giver of all good things, giver of bread, giver of life, make us those who not only live in thanksgiving for the gifts we receive, but those who joyfully share your good gifts with all. In the name of the one who is our bread of life. Amen.