

# A Prayer before a Fast or Simple Meal

## *Call to Prayer*

**Leader:** We gather remembering that we are now and always in the holy presence of God.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** There is a Latin American grace: "O God to those who have hunger give bread; and to us who have bread give the hunger for justice."

We gather today to share a simple meal and remember our brothers and sisters around the world, who on a daily basis, feel the pangs of hunger. The task of understanding and ending world hunger seems so great, but we are not helpless. Working together, we are strong. United as one human family, we can create a world rooted in a vision of justice and peace.

Together we pray:

**All:** O holy and righteous One, may we walk in your ways with renewed vigor. Turn our hearts to you as we pray, mindful of our sisters and brothers in need. Hasten our steps to you as we fast; unburden us from whatever keeps us from you. Direct our acts of giving and service, that we may reflect Jesus' empowerment of the poor. May our prayer and sharing be a faith-filled cooperation with the vision of your kingdom of truth, peace and love. Amen.

## **First Reading:** Isaiah 58, 6-8

Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you,  
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

The Word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

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**Second Reading:** *From a sermon by Archbishop Oscar Romero, El Salvador, September 10, 1978*

"Whoever fulfills the duty of love fulfills the whole law," says Paul. "You shall not steal, you shall not kill, you shall do no wrong to another - all this is contained in one phrase: you shall love your neighbor."

If there were love of neighbor...  
there would be no terrorism, no repression, no selfishness, none of such cruel inequalities in society, no abductions, no crimes.

Love sums up the law. Not only that, it gives Christian meaning to all human relations. Even those who call themselves atheists, when they are humane, fulfill the essence of a relationship that God wants among human beings: Love.

Love gives plenitude to all human duties, and without love justice is only the sword. With love, justice becomes a brother's embrace. Without love, laws are arduous, repressive, cruel – mere policemen. But when there is love - security forces would be superfluous; there would be no jails or torture, no will to beat anyone.

## Reflection & Sharing:

- To what fast am I called at this point in my life?
- What actions – rooted in love - can I take to help end world hunger?

## Closing Prayer

(Adapted from "Our Prayer" – Prayer by a worker of Peace Market in Korea. In *The Catholic Youth Bible*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press. 2000.)

**Leader:** Before we break our fast this morning, let us join hearts and voices together in prayer, remembering God's grace ever-present in, moving and changing our lives . . .

**All:** God, source of life, make us keep the sputtering lantern burning and not to break a wounded reed.

**Left:** Make us understand the secret of eternal life from the pulse of blood in our veins,

**Right:** And realize the worth of a life from the movement of hearts throughout the world.

**Left:** Make us not discriminate the rich and the poor, the high and the low,

**Right:** the learned and the ignorant, those we know well and those we do not know.

**Left:** A human life cannot be exchanged for the whole world,

**Right:** this supreme task of keeping the loves of the sons and daughters of God.

**All:** Let us realize how lovely it is to feel the burdens of responsibility. Make this our prayer and companion us, ever-present God, to a world where your justice lives forever and ever.  
Amen.