

As Christians, we are invited into a world where all are fed, no matter how hungry.

Matthew's challenge to us that 'nothing is impossible' demands our wholehearted response--a response that recognizes that as long as some are hungry, none can enjoy true and perfect holiness.

*We cannot speak much in the way of good news to people who are starving or dying of preventable diseases. We must begin by **doing** good news with those who are most vulnerable. In and through both, God is glorified, and all creation can begin to experience the shalom for which we were created.*

~ Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori,
Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church

Food Stamp Challenge: 2007 Journal

When he was at table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. - Luke 24:30-31

Sources:

Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force & Trinity Episcopal Church, Portland, Oregon

Bread for the World Institute *Hunger Report 2007: Healthy Food, Farms and Families*

Bread for the World Institute *Hunger Report 2006: Frontline Issues in Nutrition Assistance*

South Dakota Dept. of Social Services, Statistical Reports

Food Research and Action Center

Bread for the World - South Dakota

(back cover)

Protecting Food Stamps

In a time of tight budgets, lawmakers find it tempting to cut programs that serve poor people. Before Hurricane Katrina, proposals in Congress would cut Food Stamps anywhere from \$600 million to \$1.8 billion.

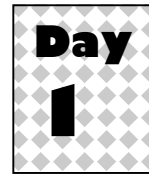
Since 2002, the House of Representatives has considered bills that would have allowed states to essentially cap funding for the Food Stamp Program. That would limit the availability of this crucial safety net—no matter how high the poverty rate rose or how many people needed assistance.

Because Food Stamps is an “entitlement” program, anyone who is eligible under its rules must be offered benefits. If it were a “discretionary” program rather than an entitlement, the availability of food stamps would be limited to a preset budget amount. Crises, like Katrina or other economic downturns, would be compounded by increased hunger.

The best way to counter such harmful proposals is through strong and effective advocacy by people of faith and conscience who are also voters. Bread for the World is a Christian organization whose members are motivated by their faith to seek justice.

This year the Food Stamp Program is being reauthorized as part of the Farm Bill. Bread for the World is advocating for improvements to the Food Stamp Program, including

- Raising the benefit to ensure that families have access to healthy food
- Providing states with more financial support to administer the program & increase participation.



The First Breakfast

Jesus’ third appearance to the disciples after his resurrection happens at the end of a long, unsuccessful night of fishing (John 21:1-19). The disciples recognize Jesus when their nets are suddenly filled with fish. “Come and have breakfast,” Jesus calls to them from the shore.

When and where might you experience sudden abundance this week as you eat on a food stamp budget?

Food "Stamps" is now a

misnomer. Food Stamp benefits are distributed through a state's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system.

When you get food stamps, you are given an account, like a bank account. It comes with a plastic card called the EBT card. You use it the same way someone would buy food with a bankcard or a credit card. Each month, your food stamp benefit amount is added to your account.

With the EBT card you can buy any food except pet food or heated foods. You can also buy seeds and plants to grow food, as long as you are buying them from a store that accepts food stamps (like a grocery store).

You cannot use your EBT card to buy soap, toothpaste, toilet paper, vitamins, tobacco, alcohol or anything else that is not food.

There are a few places where you can use food stamp benefits to get prepared meals. Your food stamp benefits can be used to purchase meals from programs such as Meals on Wheels.



The School of the Eucharist

The prayer which we repeat at every Mass: "Give us this day our daily bread," obliges us to do everything possible, in cooperation

with international, state and private institutions, to end or at least reduce the scandal of hunger and malnutrition afflicting so many millions of people in our world... In a particular way, the Christian laity, formed at the school of the Eucharist, are called to assume their specific political and social responsibilities. To do so, they need to be adequately prepared through practical education in charity and justice.

From "Sacramentum Caritatis," an exhortation by Pope Benedict XVI, delivered on February 22, 2007

What might be an example of a "political and social responsibility" for a follower Jesus?
