

# First Fridays for Food Security: June 3, 2011



## What is First Fridays for Food Security?

On every first Friday for a year, eat meals that cost only as much as is allotted for a family of your size by the [USDA Modified Thrifty Food Plan](#). (You will need to divide the weekly cost by seven.) This plan is used as the basis for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly called food stamps).\* Many individuals or families may notice a disparity between the cost of their normal meals and the amount allotted in the food plan. The “cutting back” that will likely be required in order to stay “in budget” can be considered a form of fasting.

## Why fast?

“Voluntary fasting from food creates in us a greater openness to God's Spirit and deepens our compassion for those who are forced to go without food. The discomfort brought about by fasting unites us to the sufferings of Christ. Fasting should bring to mind the sufferings of all those for whom Christ suffered.” (United States Catholic Bishops, *Penitential Practices for Today's Catholics*, 2000)

Participating in this fast can help you be open to the Holy Spirit and walk in solidarity with all those for whom access to adequate, nutritious food is difficult.

## When should I fast?

Every first Friday through April 6, 2012. If desired, individuals or families can choose to extend the fast for the entire week.

## Where will this event take place?

Individuals and families all around the U.S. are invited to participate from their own communities. On each first Friday, those participating can visit the [Facebook event page](#) to discuss their experiences and activities. There, they can also access prayer and educational resources from USCCB.

\* Assistance is awarded to make up the difference between a family's personal resources and the amount allotted by the USDA Modified Thrifty Food Plan.

## A Eucharistic Response to Hunger

As Catholics, we are called to be concerned about the food insecurity experienced by so many of our brothers and sisters, including 17.4 million households in the United States.

This concern is rooted in our identity as a eucharistic people. When we celebrate the Eucharist each week, we do so as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:17-34; 12). St. Augustine says to the members of this body, “Be what you see, and receive what you are.” In celebrating the Eucharist, we participate in Christ's self-sacrifice and are called to live that sacrifice in our lives through our love and concern for others. St. Augustine teaches that our “Amen” during the Eucharistic celebration is made authentic through the actions of our lives (Sermon 272).

Similarly, Pope John Paul II notes, “The Eucharist is not merely an expression of communion in the Church's life; it is also a *project of solidarity* for all of humanity. . . . The Christian who takes part in the Eucharist learns to become a *promoter of communion, peace and solidarity* in every situation” (*Mane Nobiscum Domine*, no. 27).



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Pope Benedict XVI reaffirms this when he states in *Deus Caritas Est*, “A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented” (no. 14).

Thus, the Eucharist is celebrated rightly when it is linked with the recognition of our membership in Christ’s body and when we lovingly respond to those members of our community who are in need. The Eucharist calls us to right relationship with God, ourselves and others, invites us to community and solidarity, and sends us on mission to help transform our communities, neighborhoods and world.

## How You Can Respond

As a Eucharistic people, we must live “eucharistically” in our local and global communities by being people of solidarity—with the unborn, the hungry, the elderly, and all who experience any form of injustice.

On June 3, join the [Facebook event](#) and follow the instructions in this handout to fast in solidarity with all those who lack access to nutritious food.

On that day, consider attending daily mass or praying before the Blessed Sacrament. Lift up especially the needs of all those who are food insecure globally and locally. Then live your “Amen” by volunteering your time at a local soup kitchen or food pantry. Send an email or make a phone call to your elected officials to urge legislators to prioritize our brothers and sisters in need in their budget decisions. Visit the USCCB [Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development web site](#) for more information.



## Table Prayer

*We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.*

*Please read the following passage from the family Bible:*

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

### Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

As we receive your Body and Blood in the Eucharist, may we grow ever closer to our brothers and sisters, members of your Body.

Through our words and actions, may we help those in need, particularly those who are hungry and those who do not know from where their next meal is coming.

May we be your hands, your feet, and your voice in a world that hungers for you.

Amen.

As members of Christ’s Body we pray:

Our Father.....

