

Lenten Prayers for an End to Hunger

First Week in Lent | February 21–27

Jesus is baptized and blessed by the Spirit

Genesis 9:8-17 1 Peter 3:18-22
Psalm 25:1-10 Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

—*Mark 1:9-10*

Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

—*Psalm 25:6*



PRAYER

O Christ, we give thanks that during this season of Lent you come into our lives, proclaiming God's salvation. Renew our faith in this good news so that we who are baptized in your Spirit may raise our voices on behalf of those who hunger in our world. *Amen.*

ACTION

Bread for the World's 2021 Offering of Letters launches a decade of education and action devoted to ending hunger. In the months ahead, you will have opportunities to communicate with your members of Congress about policies that address food systems, climate change, economic justice, and racial and gender equity. Plan to participate in one of Bread's regional webinars and hear from your regional organizer. For info and to register, visit bread.org/webinars.

Jesus invites us to take up the cross

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Romans 4:13-25

Psalm 22:23-31

Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

[Jesus] called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”

—*Mark 8:34-35*

The poor shall eat and be satisfied;

those who seek him shall praise the Lord....

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord;

and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

—*Psalm 22:26-27*

PRAYER

O God, you desire that all people should eat and be satisfied. As we follow Jesus to Jerusalem and the cross, may our hearts be so transformed that we lose our lives in sharing your bounty with all in need. *Amen.*

REFLECTION

Dietary quality, nutritional content, affordability, and accessibility are factors that support resilient and efficient food systems. Strong food systems are essential to protecting everyone’s health and reaching those most at risk of falling further into hunger and poverty. Notice where your groceries come from and reflect on how our food systems are interconnected.



The readings are those appointed for each Sunday in Lent in the Revised Common Lectionary. All Scripture texts are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

Visit bread.org/lent for an online version of these Lenten Prayers — and to sign up to receive weekly reflections, prayers, stories, and actions throughout Lent.

Jesus calls us to true worship

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple....



—*John 2:13-15a*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

—*Psalm 19:14*

PRAYER

O Christ, you enable us to worship God with our entire lives. Grant us the courage to speak out against greed and injustice in our world. Embolden us as we challenge our nation's leaders to change the conditions that allow hunger to persist. *Amen.*

ACTION

Sustained economic growth is vital to ending hunger. In the United States, 1 in 6 families struggles to get enough to eat. For African American and Latino families, the level of hunger is disproportionately higher. To ensure economic justice for all, workers must be paid enough to afford a healthy diet for themselves and their families. Bread for the World Institute's Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation will help you learn more about the connections among racial equity, hunger, and poverty. To learn more, visit bread.org/simulation.

**This Lent, support Bread for the World's voice for an
end to hunger and donate at bread.org/lentoffering.**

Jesus is lifted up for our salvation

Numbers 21:4-9

Ephesians 2:1-10

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

John 3:14-21

[Jesus said,] “And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

—*John 3:14-17*

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.

—*Psalm 107:1*

PRAYER

O God, you lift up your Son Jesus on the cross so that the whole world might be saved. Sustained by your love, may we not grow weary in working to help protect and restore the natural environment that sustains us all.
Amen.

ACTION

Because of climate change, widespread drought is making it harder to grow crops and make a living. The U.S. government should support efforts to help farmers plant drought-resistant crops—and join international efforts to reduce the carbon emissions that cause climate change. To learn more and take the pledge to be a climate steward, visit bread.org/climatepledge.



The woodcuts throughout Lenten Prayers for an End to Hunger were created by the artist Helen Siegl, a longtime Bread for the World member.

Make prayers to end hunger part of your regular prayer life. To sign up to receive emailed prayers throughout the year, visit bread.org/pray.

Jesus nears Jerusalem — and the cross

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 5:5-10

Psalms 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16

John 12:20-33

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

—*John 12:23-24*

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

—*Psalms 51:10 and 12*



PRAYER

O Christ, we give thanks that, in your suffering and death, you reveal God’s glory and offer us the gift of new life. As you create a new heart in us, may our eyes be opened to new ways we can create hope and opportunity for those who hunger and live in poverty. *Amen.*

REFLECTION

Disparities and inequities are built into the social fabric of every country. Women and girls are more disadvantaged than their male counterparts. In the United States, African American and Latino communities experience higher unemployment rates as well as higher levels of hunger and poverty. In order to truly end hunger, measures that overcome systemic racism and gender inequity must be put in place for those who struggle with hunger. Pray that you might have a heart that repents of racial and gender inequity and that asks for God’s grace to move you to love all people.



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Jesus is anointed for burial

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Philippians 2:5-11

Psalms 31:9-16

Mark 14:1-15:47

*These are the
Scripture readings
appointed for
Passion Sunday.*

While [Jesus] was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured out the ointment on his head.... [Jesus said], “She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial.”

—*Mark 14:3 and 8*

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.”

My times are in your hand;

deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

Let your face shine upon your servant;

save me in your steadfast love.

—*Psalms 31:14-16*

PRAYER

O Christ, grant us grace and hope as we prepare for Good Friday. By your crucifixion and resurrection, you overcome death and all the powers of evil. As you raise us up to new life, use our hands, hearts, and voices to see that all people benefit from the abundance of God’s creation. *Amen.*



ACTION

Bread for the World’s Offering of Letters is an opportunity for individuals, congregations, campuses, or groups to gather and write personalized letters or emails to their members of Congress on hunger and poverty issues. Plan now to organize your own Offering of Letters to Congress and be encouraged by Christ’s words “... where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20). To learn how you can organize an Offering of Letters, visit bread.org/ol.

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation’s decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad.