



Goal 2: ZERO HUNGER

One in nine people suffers from malnutrition.² Who are they? What faces are hidden behind the statistics? Malnutrition is a global problem, but most people suffering from food scarcity live in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and there are more women than men.³

When we say that a person is malnourished, it means that their daily minimum requirements for nutrition for a year are not met. The number of malnourished people has increased in the period from 2014 to 2017. The UN's World Food Programme points to climate change and armed conflicts as two of the reasons for this increase.⁴ When a drought persists year after year, and people lose both their crops and their livestock, it is a daunting example of the impact of the climate crisis. When civilians in conflict areas cannot get hold of food, it truly shows how brutal the hidden consequences of war can be. This illustrates how the various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are linked.

Hunger is also closely linked to poverty, and in order to solve the hunger problem, we must fight poverty. We also need targeted efforts towards sustainable agriculture. UN organisations and other international actors can help countries develop their agricultural practices in a sustainable direction, while also fighting hunger. If we can improve the living conditions of small farmers and landless agricultural labourers, and ensure more women have access to seeds, feed, fertiliser, tools and technology, we have come a long way.

Biblical reflection

"Give us this day our daily bread". We know these words from the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. Faith in God and confidence in God's caring love relates to everyday life and our basic needs. Without daily nourishment, we will lose our strength. Jesus knew this well from the reality in which he lived, a reality that also today affects millions of innocent people and causes suffering and death.

"Our daily bread" refers to what we need each day, with a reminder that enough is enough. We should not stock food unnecessarily, nor adopt consumption habits that burden our community or the environment.

Jesus teaches us to pray in plural, in solidarity with all who are hungry. Our concern should not be limited to satisfying our own needs, but to strive – in our prayers and in our work – for a world where everyone has the food they need each and every day. "You give them something to eat", Jesus told his disciples when thousands were without food in the desert. In a wonderful way, limited resources were transformed so that everyone had enough to eat. Part of this wonder consisted in the equal sharing of fish and bread. Thus, a shortage of food was turned into abundance (Matthew 14:15-21).

Challenge

How can we follow Jesus' command to feed the poor, in a way that both safeguards the dignity of those who receive help and strengthens their ability to feed themselves?

Questions

- What does it mean in our society of abundance and consumption when we pray "give us this day our daily bread"?
- Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev said: "The question of bread for myself is a material question, but the question of bread for my neighbour is a spiritual question." What does the hunger of others have to do with faith and spiritual life?

Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ,
you are the bread of life.
Break the yoke of injustice.
The earth is yours.
Teach us to cultivate it with
wisdom and care.
Help us to share our daily bread.*

*We commit everything and everyone,
into your hands, Lord. Amen.*