

East Africa Food Crisis 2017

Reflection Resource for Parishes

20 million people are currently on the brink of famine in South Sudan and other areas of East Africa. Caritas Australia and their partners are delivering life-saving food and water to countries most in need including South Sudan, Kenya and Malawi.

This major crisis has been driven by large scale droughts, compounded by climate change, inflation and the ongoing conflict in some countries. Urgent assistance is needed now, to respond to those experiencing severe drought and food insecurity.

A reading from the Gospel of John (16:1-15)

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick.

Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.

Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little."

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?"

Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.

When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.

When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world." Since Jesus knew they were going to come and carry him off to make him King, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.

Reflection Points:

- Who are the people suffering today without a meal?
- Where is the presence of Jesus among these suffering people? Or am I the representative of Jesus?
- What are the resources we have to share with them?
- How can we share our resources and blessings with those who are suffering and persecuted in our world?
- When I start sharing my resources and blessings, will I become poor?
- How can I become a peacemaker?
- We read in the Gospel how the actions of one small child changed the lives of the masses. What are the small actions we can take to bring about change in the lives of others?
- As a Parish and Catholic Community how can we help the suffering sisters and brothers in East Africa?



Photo credit: Caritas Internationalis

Viola, pictured here with her son, fled her village in South Sudan due to the escalating violence. Viola received seeds and tools from Caritas, and is now cultivating vegetables to supplement the refugees' daily diet of maize and beans.

"May the Lord sustain these,
our brothers and sisters, and
those who work to help them"
Pope Francis