

OFFERING of LETTERS

There are two distinct, but complementary ways we as Catholics respond to the call to put love into action. **Christian Charity** is first of all, the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations, such as feeding the hungry. (Pope Benedict XVI) **Social Justice** concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*)

Help us walk with both feet and ensure all God's hungry children are fed!

Please take a few minutes to write your members of Congress. Urge them to support reauthorization of a farm bill that builds healthy, equitable, and sustainable food systems. We will have printed letters (like the one below) ready for your signature (and any additional message) after Masses next weekend. Please advocate with us!

Studies show that personalized letters and emails are one of the best ways to reach members of Congress. **Adding a few sentences to the sample letter about why you, as a constituent, really care about an issue will make them stand out to your senators and representative. Give it some thought this week...** Members of Congress want to hear from constituents about the issues on which they will vote in the Senate and House of Representatives. This Offering of Letters is both an effective tool in shaping public policy and a strong expression of our faith in action.

Dear Senator _____

SAMPLE LETTER

The farm bill is our nation's most important national food system legislation. It is critical to the work of ending hunger at home and abroad. Indeed, the farm bill impacts each one of us. As Congress works to renew our food and farm programs through the farm bill, I urge you to support legislation that builds healthy, equitable, and sustainable food systems.

Specifically, I ask you to:

- Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables by increasing support for produce specific Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), which provides resources on top of monthly SNAP benefits for a limited number of households to use towards the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables primarily at farmers' markets.
- Eliminate barriers to SNAP for marginalized populations. For example, end the ban on former drug offenders, eliminate work requirements for college students, and permit indigenous communities to administer SNAP and other federal nutrition programs on reservations.
- Keep food out of landfills by increasing support for post-harvest food recovery efforts and addressing the threat to food security posed by extreme weather.
- Support funding for international food aid programs such as Food for Peace.

As a person of faith, I am moved to help and advocate for people experiencing hunger and poverty—no matter where they live. This is why I urge you to support a farm bill that builds healthy, equitable, and sustainable food systems.

Sincerely,

(Your name and address)

Love in Action...



Prepare letters with us! After Masses in the Gathering Area of church March 11th and 12th ... and in the parish hall on March 28th at our "Bread for me, Bread for the World" soup supper!

1. Ask for a specific action, using your own words or this sentence:
 - I urge you to support a farm bill that builds healthy, equitable, and sustainable food systems.
2. Give reasons for your request and make it personal.
 - Share a personal reason or story that motivated you to write.
 - Show own organization's commitment: "My church is helping by (example) but I also urge you to protect the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) from cuts."
3. Write your name and address at the end of your letter and on the envelope, so your members of Congress know you are one of their constituents.

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Moved by God's grace in Jesus Christ, we reach out to our neighbors, whether they live in the next house, the next state, or on the next continent.

We experience God's grace and love through our faith in the saving power of Jesus' death and resurrection. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another" (1 John 3:16).

In the Gospels, Jesus was compassionate to all people, especially the widow, the orphan, the stranger, hungry people, poor people—those most vulnerable in society. Jesus loved all people, rich and poor, and actively cared for those in need. He urged his disciples to do the same.

As followers of Christ, we are called to proclaim and embody God's reconciling love at all times and in all places. We work to end hunger and poverty in our communities, in our country, and in other countries.

Throughout Scripture, God calls people into community and sets the expectation that leaders (whether they are kings, pharaohs, or elected officials) should care for their people. Therefore, we also reflect God's love by challenging individuals and institutions that have the power to change laws and structures that keep people vulnerable. As God's hands and feet in the world, we work toward a beloved community in which every person has an equal opportunity to thrive.

The Offering of Letters is one opportunity for Christians to live out this commitment. It invites us to be good stewards, using our voices to encourage our elected representatives to take the necessary steps to end hunger.