

# Reflection: How will our fast help the poor and hungry?

(45 minutes)

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FACE THE FAST

## Objective

Through this activity participants will:

- reflect on their reasons for attending this Food Fast and
- consider how their fasting will make a difference in the lives of the poor around the world.

## Activity Summary

This activity should be done towards the beginning of the Food Fast. Through a process of journaling and sharing, participants will connect their fast with our responsibility to assist our brothers and sisters in need.

## Materials Needed

- copy of *How will our fast help the poor and hungry?* handout for each participant
- pens/pencils
- music
- music player
- flipchart paper
- markers
- tape

## Preparation

Ask 4 participants to be readers and provide them with a copy of the reflection ahead of time. Highlight the part you would like each of them to read.

Write each reflection question from *How will our fast help the poor and hungry?* at the top of a separate sheet of flipchart paper. Post the paper around the reflection space.

*Option:* Use *Creating a Fasting Atmosphere: Prayer and Reflection Space* for the setting of this reflection.

## Procedure

Invite participants into the prayer and reflection space and provide each person with a copy of the *How will our fast help the poor and hungry?* handout.

Have the readers read their section and then allow 5-10 minutes between each reading for participants to reflect on the reading and respond to the questions. Play a CD of soft instrumental music throughout this activity.

## Debrief

At the end of the reflection, invite participants to share their answers to the questions with the entire group. Write their thoughts, words and emotions on the flipchart paper you have prepared ahead of time. Keep these reflections posted in the Prayer and Reflection Space so during quiet times and breaks participants can continue their reflection.

Be sure to provide time to discuss responses to “How will our fast today help the poor and hungry in our world?”

## Reflection: How will our fast help the poor and hungry?

### Handout

FACE THE FAST

*As we continue our Food Fast, we begin to recognize that fasting is important and can guide us towards a deeper spiritual life. Take a moment to be still and to open your hearts and minds so that we may continue to deepen our relationship with God, with each other and with our global family.*

#### **Reader 1: A reading from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 58: 6-11)**

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke;

Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am! If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech;

If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday;

Then the LORD will guide you always and give you plenty even on the parched land. He will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails.

**Consider your decision to participate in this Food Fast and how Isaiah encourages us to fast. Why are you here today?**

#### **Reader 2: A reading from Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* #27**

Life in many poor countries is still extremely insecure as a consequence of food shortages, and the situation could become worse: *hunger* still reaps enormous numbers of victims among those who, like Lazarus, are not permitted to take their place at the rich man's table, contrary to the hopes expressed by Paul VI. *Feed the hungry* is an ethical imperative for the universal Church, as she responds to the teachings of her Founder, the Lord Jesus, concerning solidarity and the sharing of goods. Moreover, the elimination of world hunger has also, in the global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet. Hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on shortage of social resources, the most important of which are institutional...The right to food, like the right to water, has an important place within the pursuit of other rights, beginning with the fundamental right to life. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a public conscience that considers *food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination*

**What is Pope Benedict asking us to do? Who are you fasting for today?**

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## Handout

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**Reader 3: A reading from the U.S. Bishops' statement, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good #15***

Each of us should carefully consider our choices and lifestyles. We live in a culture that prizes the consumption of material goods. While the poor often have too little, many of us can be easily caught up in a frenzy of wanting more and more—a bigger home, a larger car, etc. Even though energy resources literally fuel our economy and provide a good quality of life, we need to ask about ways we can conserve energy, prevent pollution, and live more simply.

**How do our decisions and choices affect our brothers and sisters around the world? What are you fasting from today?**

**Reader 4: A reading from the U.S. Bishops' statement, *Called to Global Solidarity***

Solidarity is action on behalf of the one human family, calling us to help overcome the divisions in our world. Solidarity binds the rich to the poor. It makes the free zealous for the cause of the oppressed. It drives the comfortable and secure to take risks for the victims of tyranny and war. It calls those who are strong to care for those who are weak and vulnerable across the spectrum of human life. It opens homes and hearts to those in flight from terror and to migrants whose daily toil supports affluent lifestyles. Peacemaking, as Pope John Paul II has told us, is the work of solidarity.

**How does this Food Fast join us in solidarity with our global family? How will our fast today help the poor and hungry in our world?**

*Throughout our Food Fast, consider your answers to these questions. If you begin to struggle with your fasting, return to your thoughts, answers and feelings and know that God is accompanying you on this journey.*

# Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

(45 minutes)

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FACE THE FAST

## Objective

Through this reflection, participants will:

- think more deeply about the characteristics of solidarity;
- form and articulate personal responses to the concept of solidarity through journaling;
- share and discuss the meaning of solidarity with other participants; and
- connect solidarity with the themes of climate change and food security.

## Activity Summary

Participants will read four passages on solidarity and care for God's creation and explore the different aspects of solidarity through journaling.

## Materials Needed

- copy of the *Exploring Solidarity* handout for each participant
- pens/pencils

## Procedure

The term "solidarity" is used throughout Catholic social teaching and in the outreach work of the Church, but oftentimes, Catholics do not fully understand its meaning. Consider using this reflection early in the Food Fast to provide grounding in the meaning of solidarity.

Distribute an *Exploring Solidarity* handout to each participant. Invite them to read each passage and then spend time responding to the questions that follow each passage. They can spend their time on those passages and questions that interest them the most. Allow participants to journal for about 30 minutes.

## Debrief

Ask participants to come back to the larger group. Invite them to share the questions they explored and what they discovered about solidarity through this reflection. End the reflection by asking why solidarity is so important when we look at global poverty and hunger issues, including the role climate change plays in people's food security.

# Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

## Handout

FACE THE FAST

“Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concerns*, #38

Some things to consider and journal on (you are not limited to these questions, nor required to answer all):

- Did you have a firm idea of what solidarity was before you read this quote?
- How does John Paul’s definition of solidarity help you understand what this concept means?
- Why does he include the concept that one has to “persevere” in one’s determination?
- What does this mean in your own life?
- When John Paul adds the idea that we are responsible for each other, how does he expand on the concept of helping your neighbor?
- What does taking on responsibility for others mean to you?
- How can you foresee it playing out in your life as you move through different stages (e.g., child, teenager, student, professional, marriage and family)?

# Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

## Handout

FACE THE FAST

“In a world that tends to give more and more incentives to individualism, the first service of people of faith is attention to neighbors, in solidarity and sharing.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, June 15, 2008

Some things to consider and journal on (you are not limited to these questions, nor required to answer all):

- In what ways does our culture encourage individual accomplishments?
- In what ways does our culture encourage common goals?
- How has this influenced your life?
- Do you recognize a tension within yourself between individualism and the call to solidarity?
- Why is it important to give “attention” to others?

# Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

## Handout

FACE THE FAST

“We have inherited from past generations, and we have benefitted from their work. We have obligations towards all, and we cannot refuse to interest ourselves in those who will come after us to enlarge the human family. The reality of human solidarity, which is a benefit for us, also imposes a duty for future generations.”

Pope Paul VI, *On the Development of Peoples*, #17, 1967

Some things to consider and journal on (you are not limited to these questions, nor required to answer all):

- In what ways have you directly benefitted from the generations that have come before, in terms of both the generations of our global family and of your individual family?
- What do you *owe* future generations, in general, and in terms of food security?
- What do you *owe* future generations in terms of the environment?

# Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

## Handout

FACE THE FAST

### Creative Solidarity

Your creative love, O God, brought forth our world,  
Once a garden where humans  
Could taste and see the goodness of the earth.

But our eyes have been blinded  
to the beauty of Creation,  
to the knowledge that it is Gift,  
one given so that all humans may live and flourish.

Our indifference changes the world;  
Even mighty glaciers weep now.  
Our disregard for our sisters and brothers  
Threatens the very skies above us.  
Our passivity begins to choke us, and  
The excess of our lifestyles blot out the sun.

Call us to renewal, to stewardship;  
Call us to solidarity to the earth and all its creatures.  
Give us new vision to see the fragile beauty that remains to us;  
Give us new spiritual energy to become active  
In loving the world through our daily life;  
Give us new voices to speak out for environmental solidarity.

Bless us again with the gift  
Of being a joyful community;  
Bless us with a love of your Creation  
And we will glimpse your Eden once again.

J. M. Deren

This poem presents images of what the world was created to be: Psalm 34 calls people of faith to “taste and see” that the Lord, and all that he has made, is good. The poem also reflects on what is happening to God’s creation. Consider some of the following questions:

- How is the physical world tied to God’s desire that we are nourished in body and in spirit?
- Are there things that keep you from seeing and tasting the richness of the natural world?
- Are there times you become “indifferent” to God’s Creation?
- How does solidarity help us gain new perspectives on the earth and its people and offer us a new vision of what the world can be?
- How do we “love the world” in our daily life?
- How can the activity of being a loving and joyful community give us “new voices” so we can help with the healing of the earth and the feeding of its entire people?

# Reflection: In my prayer, through my fasting, with my gifts

(45 minutes)

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# FACE THE FAST

## Objective

Through this activity participants will reflect on how their prayer, fasting, and giving of themselves during this Food Fast can help them gain a better understanding of what God is calling us to do in our world.

## Activity Summary

Participants will consider reflections on the practices of prayer, fasting, and giving of ourselves, and consider these reflections in the context of this Food Fast.

## Materials Needed

- pens
- paper

## Procedure

Invite participants to seat themselves comfortably and quietly. Pass out pens and paper to each person. Then lead the group through a guided reflection using the following script.

**Leader:** Throughout this Food Fast we have been spending time in prayer together, fasting from food, and considering actions we can take to help others. Let's now spend a few minutes considering these three things: prayer, fasting, and giving of ourselves.

First, let us consider prayer.

In our prayers we seek to connect ourselves to God, lifting our minds and hearts to Him. At different times our prayers may be focused on requesting guidance or assistance, expressing our thoughts or sharing our challenges, or simply worshipping God.

We know that God hears us and listens to all of our prayers. In the first letter of John (1 John 5:14), the apostle tells us, "And we have this confidence in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

Our prayers can also help clear our minds and open our hearts so we can better hear God's message for us. Let us now take a few moments to consider what we have "heard" during our prayers throughout this Food Fast. What is God telling us through our prayers? What do we hear when we turn our attention away from ourselves and towards God?

*Allow a few minutes for reflection on this statement about prayer. Ask participants to write the phrase, "In My Prayer" on their papers, and then write a word or phrase about what they have heard in their prayers during this Food Fast.*

Now let us consider our fasting.

We have consciously and willingly decided to go without food for the duration of this Food Fast. There are many examples of fasting in the Bible and throughout history. Jesus himself fasted in the desert for forty days, telling us, "One does not live by bread alone." (Luke 4:4)

As our Food Fast progresses we begin to feel the pangs of hunger. Our hunger pangs are a ready reminder of our inability to sustain ourselves, of our reliance on God and on the divine generosity we receive from the earth, His creation.

We ask ourselves, how will this fast help me to recognize my dependence on God and to love Him with all my heart, mind and soul? Through the pangs of hunger that I feel, am I better able to recognize my neighbor in those who struggle with hunger and poverty? Will I be better able to love my neighbor as myself?

**Reflection:  
In my prayer,  
through my  
fasting, with  
my gifts**

*(45 minutes)*

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FACE THE FAST

*Allow a few minutes for reflection on this statement about fasting. Ask participants to write the phrase, "Through My Fasting" on their papers, and then write a word or phrase about what they have experienced through their fasting.*

Finally, let us consider giving.

In Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, he invites us to consider, "whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

When we reflect on the many gifts that we have received from God, we feel grateful. We feel compelled in our gratitude to share our gifts with others. God provides for us through His overwhelming generosity, and in turn, we are called to be generous towards others.

Spend a few minutes thinking about the gifts and talents you have received from God. What "abundant graces" has God provided you? How does God give you all that you need? How can you use these abundant gifts to "give back" to our brothers and sisters in need?

*Allow a few minutes for reflection on this statement about giving. Ask participants to write the phrase, "With My Gifts" on their papers, and then write a word or phrase about how they intend to share their gifts with others after this Food Fast.*

*At the end of the reflection, invite participants to share with each other some of the words or phrases that they have written in response to the reflections on prayer, fasting, and giving of themselves.*

# Reflection: A Faith Perspective on Climate Change

(40 minutes)

1 of 2

FACE THE FAST

## Objective

Through this reflection, participants will learn that Catholics in this country and around the world are taking climate change seriously and are inviting the entire Catholic community to see, reflect and act in a variety of ways to respond to climate change because of its impact on the poor and on their food security.

## Activity Summary

The participants will read an opening review of the Church's current perspective on climate change, and then engage in a matching activity that will help them realize how people of faith are responding in a variety of ways to this challenge. (The matching activity has some hints to help participants match up the programs, quotes, etc. with the right organization, speaker, etc.) The participants will then discuss what they have learned.

## Materials Needed

- copy of the *Food Security and Climate Change: A Faith Perspective* handout for each participant (See: *Setting the Context for Food Fast*)
- copy of *The Catholic Church and Climate Change* for each participant
- pens/pencils
- flipchart paper
- markers
- tape

## Procedure

On flipchart paper, write the answers to matching activity from *The Catholic Church and Climate Change*. Fold the paper up or cover it so the answers are not visible.

*Answers:*

A-6, B-2, C-5, D-10, E-3, F-4, G-8, H-9, I-7, J-1

On another piece of flipchart paper, write the reflection questions that will be used during debriefing. You might want to write one question per page to leave room to write responses.

Distribute a copy of *Food Security and Climate Change: A Faith Perspective* to each participant. Ask one participant to read it aloud. Answer any questions that might follow this reading.

Distribute a copy of *The Catholic Church and Climate Change* to each participant. Participants are to match the quote to the person or organization it is from. They can work in pairs or small groups to complete the matching activity.

## **Reflection: A Faith Perspective on Climate Change**

*(40 minutes)*

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**FACE THE FAST**

### **Debrief**

After 20 minutes, bring the entire group together and close the activity by asking participants to consider these reflection questions.

1. Which of these statements and programs did you find most interesting, and why?
2. What did you learn in general about the national and international Catholic response to climate change?
3. Why do you think there are a whole range of educational programs and activities on environmental issues in the Catholic community?
4. What motivates people of faith to care about the issue of climate change and its relationship to food security?
5. How can you share some of what you learned in this exercise with your Catholic family, friends, school community, and/or parish community?

# Reflection: A Faith Perspective on Climate Change

## The Catholic Church and Climate Change

To see what our Church and the faithful are saying and doing about climate change, match a through j (these are a variety of quotes and/or programs and projects) with 1 through 10 (these are the speakers and the program details).

### Column I

- a. This website resource looks at “Faithful Stewards of God’s Creation: A Catholic Resource for Environmental Justice”.
- b. “Working for the common good requires us to promote the flourishing of all human life and all of God’s creation. In a special way, the common good requires solidarity with the poor who are often without the resources to face many problems, including the potential impacts of climate change. Our obligations to the one human family stretch across space and time. They tie us to the poor in our midst and across the globe, as well as to future generations.”
- c. “We are all responsible for the protection and care of the environment. It is important for everyone to be committed at his or her proper level, working to overcome the prevalence of particular interests... Concern for the environment calls for a broad global vision of the world; a responsible common effort to move beyond approaches based on selfish nationalistic interests towards a vision constantly open to the needs of all peoples. The deterioration of any one part of the planet affects us all.”
- d. A U.S. coalition of Catholic organizations that promotes the *Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge for Creation and the Poor*.
- e. A Catholic group grounded in a spiritual tradition which brings together Church, care of community, and care for creation in farming and rural communities.
- f. These two international networks of Catholic development groups are jointly sponsoring a world-wide “Climate Justice Campaign” to bring the global community together to support policies and treaties that can effectively respond to climate change.
- g. Two major U.S. Catholic organizations calling on one million Catholics in the U.S. to join the *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* initiative, to make a difference on issues of poverty and food security, including the issue of climate change.
- h. These bishops released the *Cry of the Earth* in 2009 and sent the text and a DVD on climate change to every parish in their “green” country.
- i. In 2007, when the G8 countries (the eight richest developed countries in the world) were meeting, these seven Church representatives sent the leaders a joint letter asking for effective leadership for a global response to climate change.
- j. This U.S. Catholic organization is working on the ground in countries such as Guatemala, India and Ethiopia to help people in poverty adapt to current and future changes in their climate so they can grow the food they need.

### Column II

1. Catholic Relief Services
2. The U.S. Bishops’ statement, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, (2001)
3. National Catholic Rural Life Conference
4. Caritas Internationalis, a Vatican-sponsored network of Catholic groups in 164 countries, and CIDSE, a network of 19 Catholic Bishops’ international development organizations from Europe and North America
5. Pope Benedict XVI in his 2010 *Message of Peace*
6. The U.S. Bishops’ website on climate change, [www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate)
7. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; German Bishops’ Conference; Bishops’ Conference of France; Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan; Conference of Catholic Bishops of the Russian Federation; Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
8. CRS and U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
9. Catholic Bishops of Ireland
10. Catholic Coalition on Climate Change