



## **Bread for the World Louisiana**

**The Twomey Center for Peace Through Justice  
Loyola University New Orleans**

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### **H O P E**

The word is hope. It is the spirit, the motive, and the strength of our Christian lives. Our faith experience through the ages has been that hope was most evident and vital when we faced life's most daunting and threatening challenges. An oppressed people in Egypt were grabbed by a hope that led them out of grinding slavery to become pilgrims toward a promised land.

A dejected band of disciples, enveloped by the shadow of a deadly cross, were awakened by a resurrection of hope – the kind of hope that emboldened them to risk their lives in sharing the message that God had come in Christ to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, to set at liberty those who were oppressed.

In the early church a small band of believers, driven into caves by the Roman government, were inspired by this hope to see the visions of the book of Revelation – visions of victory for the faithful. The paradox of our faith is that we have lifted up the cross, an instrument of death,

as the sure sign of our hope in the resurrecting power of God.

This is the hope with which we face today's hunger. It is a hunger that maims and destroys thousands of human lives. It is a hope that does not flinch in the face of that hunger. The God of the resurrection takes our most intimidating threats and makes them the occasion for hope and action. One of the most dominant features of our hope is its realism. It is not marked by naïve or wishful thinking because it has the courage to be honest about life and its dangers. Our hope can be candid about the scope of the problem and about what works and what doesn't work.

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### **CHRIST OUR HOPE IS THE SPIRIT, THE MOTIVE AND THE STRENGTH OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES.**

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If some of our efforts are not effective, true hope has no need to pretend otherwise. It recognizes the reality of human sin and the limitations of human efforts. It can accept the fact that all of our efforts will not succeed. A realistic hope protects us from shallowness and gullibility.

Our hope is patient. It has the kind of strength that endures. Unburdened by a utopian naiveté, we can rejoice in small victories. We don't require smashing victories that rock the world and grab the headlines. We know that

what really counts is what happens to the least of God's children. No need is too small. No effort is insignificant. A change in the life-style of a single person or family can make a real difference in the long struggle against hunger. Christian hope has endurance because it is rooted in the power of a patient God who never gives up.

Our hope is eager. We are kept vital because we are oriented to the future. We are not enslaved to the past nor oppressed by the present. This eagerness springs from a faith in the God who makes all things new and promises that the future belongs to us.

Living in this hope engenders an enthusiasm and joy of life. There is no sour spirit here. Celebration marks our worship and our work. Our disposition features a readiness to act.

*This article is reprinted from the 1993 issue of LEAVEN, a publication of Bread for the World by Dr. McGee, professor of ethics at Baylor University.*

**Bread for the World Urges  
President to Support Global Food  
Security Program in Wake of  
Worldwide Food Price Increases**

Could there be a hunger crisis in 2011? Bread for the World urges President Obama to restore funding to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) Trust Fund. The GAFSP is a multi-donor trust fund

established to address global hunger and poverty by boosting agricultural productivity among smallholder farmers in developing countries. These farmers make up the majority of the world's poor and are extremely vulnerable to food price volatility. Bread for the World calls on the U.S. to contribute at least \$100 million in the near term to sustain GAFSP.

The GAFSP seeks to build resilience in poor communities so they can better cope when food prices rise, and to avert future hunger crises in developing countries.

The current FY 2011 budget, as negotiated in the final days of the 111th Congress, prevents any further U.S. contribution to GAFSP, effectively de-funding the program.

"The world is looking to the United States to continue its strong leadership on global food security," said Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. "The GAFSP could lose the support of several current and potential donors if the United States does not make a strong financial commitment in early 2011."

Financial contributions to GAFSP have been provided or pledged by the United States, Australia, Canada, Ireland, South Korea, Spain, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Since its inception, GAFSP has awarded more than \$300 million in grants to developing countries, and unless donors make new contributions, the

fund will cease to exist. Total commitments equal about \$925 million, pledged over three years. To date, only \$67 million of the United States' pledge of \$475 million has been met.

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## thrive

1. To make steady progress; prosper.
2. To grow vigorously; flourish

The title of tonight's memorial was ***Together We Thrive: Tucson & America***

I was there tonight in Tucson. I stood in line with the thousands to be able to participate in the memorial for the victims of Saturday's tragic shooting, to be able to pray for healing of those who are still in the hospital and for all those impacted by this tragedy.

I went because I wanted to stand up with my community and remember those we have lost. I went because I wanted to pray for the healing of those who suffer. I went because I wanted to hear what our leaders had to say.

As a college instructor, I have decided to spend some of my rhetoric class time examining and discussing texts about the shooting. It not only feels relevant to talk about words and their meaning at times like this, it feels necessary to give students a space in which they can wrestle with their feelings about an act of violence taking place in their adopted town, at a grocery store that could be their grocery store.

As we discuss in class, the words we say and the way that we say them matters. We each need to take responsibility for our own words and we need to call those we listen to, particularly our media and our political leaders, to be responsible for theirs and to speak in a way that invites rather than discourages open and thoughtful conversation. Obama said it the best last night when he said: "It's important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we're talking with each other in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds."

One of the moments I valued most about tonight was when President Obama spoke about the importance of not making this an opportunity to hate one another. He said: "But what we cannot do is use this tragedy as one more occasion to turn on each other. That we cannot do. That we cannot do."

I myself am guilty of this. When 19 people, including a congresswoman I deeply respect, were shot on Saturday, I immediately thought of the rhetoric surrounding her reelection campaign. I thought of Jesse Kelly and his screaming campaign strategies. I thought of the tea party and how often their language includes words that insinuate violence, and how whether these words are figurative or literal is often hard to tell. And on top of the enormous sadness I felt, I became really angry.

We need to listen critically to all points of view we are exposed to. But being angry and blaming those who invoke this kind of language is not ultimately the solution. The solution is not to return anger with anger, hate with hate. It seems to me that the only real solution is to move towards a society in which kindness, respect and empathy are woven into the fabric of our institutions, our neighborhoods, our daily lives. And while I do think it is important to hold our leaders and media personalities accountable for their language and encourage speech that is inclusive to understand different points of view (as Obama talked about when he emphasized the need for civil discourse), it seems to me that the most important step that each of us can take individually is to model in our day to day lives what we want our world to look like.

**meaning:** we choose to be kind, to be empathetic, to be respectful, to be generous. We weigh carefully the words we use when we speak to one another. This sounds simple, but I believe it is one of most difficult things we can commit ourselves to doing. I think of how many times per day I allow myself to become annoyed with other people: because they are not moving quick enough, because they should have used their blinker, because they are being too loud. Sometimes I merely note this to myself, but sometimes this annoyance comes out in my speech or my body language, to my perceived offenders or to other people.

One of the things I have heard multiple people say about Gabby is that she is someone who genuinely loves people, someone who tries to find the good in each person she meets.

Our responsibility is not only to be kind to the people we know and love (and let's be honest, we aren't always even able to muster that), our responsibility is to be kind and loving to people we don't know and yes, to people that to us, for whatever reason, feel the hardest to love.

Underneath vitriolic political rhetoric, underneath cuts to mental healthcare, underneath lax gun control laws all of which are valid and important things to discuss and sort through together is a society has become sick from a severe lack of connection. We don't realize how much we need each other or how our choices and interactions impact each other. We don't try to understand each other. We don't love each other in the way that we need to love and be loved. This denial of our interconnectedness is a wound we all carry and it is something that we can begin to change with every interaction we have.

Tonight, as President Obama shared stories about each of the victims, we laughed and smiled and cried as we, as a community, celebrated their lives and, in turn, grieved for their loss. When the President told us that Gabby Giffords had opened her eyes for the first time, the stadium erupted in joy, people

jumping out of their seats, tears streaming down cheeks.

I think of a young man I saw at the University Medical Center on Sunday night who had a piece of fabric safety pinned to the back of his hoodie with these words: Love is stronger.

## love is stronger

The actions we take tomorrow, next month, next year will not undo the tragedy that has been inflicted on these individual souls, on their families, on our community and our nation. There will be many more tears. There will be years of recovery and struggle. There will be much sorrow and much need. And, by saying what I say here, I in no way mean to minimize the gravity and sadness that permeates all of this.

But, it seems to me that loving each other better, caring about each other more is the only answer. This will come out not only in our daily interactions but in the decisions we make collectively as a community and as a nation. I believe this kind of love is possible. I believe in its possibility because I have known too many stories, seen too many miracles, known too many people who demonstrate in their own way the decency and compassion and beauty and endurance of the human spirit.

For now, we can pray for the strength to love each other and that the ways we can do so will be shown to us all.

*By, Lisa O'Neill*

As we prepare for the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Walk for the Hungry with the theme "A Revolution In Kindness" it would be good for us to reflect on the words of Lisa O'Neill. Words are powerful and we must choose our words and our deeds with care and love.

**JOIN THE WALK FOR THE HUNGRY  
SATURDAY, MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup>  
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