

First Fridays for Food Security: July 1, 2011



What is First Fridays for Food Security?

On every first Friday for a year, eat meals that cost only as much as is allotted for a family of your size by the [USDA Modified Thrifty Food Plan](#). (You will need to divide the weekly cost by seven.) This plan is used as the basis for food stamp allotments.* Many individuals or families may notice a disparity between the cost of their normal meals and the amount allotted in the food plan. The “cutting back” that will likely be required in order to stay “in budget” can be considered a type of fasting.

Why fast?

“Voluntary fasting from food creates in us a greater openness to God's Spirit and deepens our compassion for those who are forced to go without food. The discomfort brought about by fasting unites us to the sufferings of Christ. Fasting should bring to mind the sufferings of all those for whom Christ suffered.” (United States Catholic Bishops, *Penitential Practices for Today's Catholics*, 2000)

Participating in this fast can make you open to the Holy Spirit and help you to walk in solidarity with all those for whom access to adequate, nutritious food is difficult.

When should I fast?

Every first Friday between May 6, 2011 and April 6, 2012. If desired, individuals or families can choose to extend the fast for the entire week.

Where will this event take place?

Individuals and families all around the U.S. are invited to participate from their own communities. On each first Friday, those participating can visit the [Facebook event page](#) to discuss their experiences and activities. There, they can also access prayer and educational resources from USCCB.

* Food stamps are awarded to make up the difference between a family's personal resources and the amount allotted by the USDA Modified Thrifty Food Plan.

Hunger and the Sacred Heart of Jesus

A well-meaning evangelist once asked a migrant worker whether he had a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The man replied: “I don't know what you mean, but every day I go to Jesus and enter into his Sacred Heart. There I rest and ask him what he wants of me that day. When he tells me, I then leave to do what he asked.”



As we celebrate the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus today, let us learn from that man whose devotion to Christ pulses with love.

The Church exhorts us to open our hearts to the Lord: “God's Spirit, poured into the human heart — the Prophets proclaim — will make these same sentiments of justice and solidarity, which reside in the Lord's heart, take root in you (cf. *Jer 31:33* and *Ezek 36:26-27*)” ([Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church](#), 25).



First Fridays for Food Security: July 1, 2011

By fasting on First Fridays, we make ourselves “smaller.” Small enough to step mystically into Jesus’ compassionate heart. Small enough to listen. Small enough to follow his will and to trust that he will provide all we need to be faithful – and more.

Once we have become small in that holy sense, we can enter into a richer solidarity with others, especially those whose experiences are foreign to ours. If we have much, we can step into the suffering of those around us who must live with much less. We can rest there, listen, and at least *start* to see the world through their eyes: What would it feel like to only serve one meal to your family each day? If you didn’t have access to transportation, how would you buy groceries? Without steady work, how could you help your pregnant wife to eat healthy meals for two?

How You Can Respond

Christ invites us to show compassion to those most in need: the hungry and sick, the lonely or abandoned, the unborn and elderly, and all who suffer from injustice. Pray before the blessed Eucharist or an image of the Sacred Heart to ask how he’s calling you, specifically.

On July 1, join the [Facebook event](#) and follow the instructions in this handout to fast in solidarity with all who are food insecure.

Consider making an anonymous donation in honor of the Sacred Heart to your local food pantry or pregnancy help center – or volunteer at a program that assists others in need. Learn more about advocating on behalf of those in need. Check the USCCB [Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development web site](#) to take part in an action alert to ensure that the poor are prioritized in public policy.



Table Prayer

We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Please read the following passage from the family Bible:

1 John 4:7-16

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,
your Sacred Heart overflows with love and compassion.

You call us all to grow in our love of you
and of our brothers and sisters,
In union with you and with your Sacred
Heart,

May we pour out our love on those in need,
particularly those who are hungry
for food and for compassion.

May we share your love with the world.
Amen.

Trusting in God’s abundant compassion we
pray:

Our Father.....

