

## HOMILY FOR WORLD FOOD DAY, OCTOBER 16, 2013

Scripture: Book of Joel; 2:23-24, 26

God has made the rain come down for you,  
the early and the late rain as before.  
The threshing floors shall be full of grain  
and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.  
You shall eat and be filled,  
and shall praise the name of the LORD, your God,  
Because God has dealt wondrously with you.

This past week in Rome, an important meeting took place at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. FAO has the motto: FIAT PANIS, 'Let there be bread,' or 'may there be food for all.' The international community established the FAO to alleviate hunger everywhere. Its Committee on World Food Security (CFS) coordinates the formulation of policies and setting up of programs to achieve this goal. The CFS gave its report, and the meeting put the spotlight on the reality, indeed the scandal, of world hunger.

The opening report was called the *State of Food Insecurity* (SOFI-2013). The good news is that the number of chronically hungry people in our world has decreased. The sad truth is that the decrease was small, from 872 million in 2012 to 836 million in 2013. Hunger means that "our neighbours", nearby or far away, go to bed each day without food. They do not eat regularly, they are malnourished, and the children among them often become permanently stunted and suffer its effects for life.

The focus of World Food Day 2013 is: SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION. Systems to produce and process and distribute food must be:

- Economically sustainable, so that everyone involved can make a decent living, the companies a decent profit.
- Environmentally sustainable, which means using the land and water and air responsibly and leaving them as good as or better than we inherited them.
- Socially sustainable means the opposite of "glut here, starvation there". It means that people's need for food is met everywhere, in dignified manner.

Food systems which are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable, would mean *food security*, which is a human right of each and every child of God.

The Catholic tradition teaches this: "The human being is the author, centre and goal of all economic and social life. The decisive point of the social question is that goods created by God

for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2459)

While we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” and thank God for providing, He in turn has entrusted us with the task of producing and distributing food to all his sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters. On this World Food Day, may God stimulate and engage our creativity, persistence and confidence so that each one might help to meet the ZERO HUNGER CHALLENGE in our lifetime.

Let us conclude with a moment of silence and prayer:

All-powerful God, we appeal to your tender care.  
Even as you temper the winds and rains,  
to nurture the fruits of the earth,  
you will also send upon them the gentle shower of your blessing.  
Fill the hearts of your people with gratitude.  
From the earth’s fertility  
may the hungry be filled with good things,  
so that together your human family may with one voice proclaim  
the glory of your name. Amen!

Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson  
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace