

**INTRODUCTORY MUSIC:** [Luigi Boccherini - Minuet - String Quintet](#) (audio – 03:51)

**INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCE:** 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026 – WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY

**INTRODUCTORY PRAYER,** by the Rt Revd Christine Hardman (Former Bishop of Newcastle)

Creator God,  
Thank you for the waters of the earth,  
for the life-sustaining rains,  
lakes, and deep oceans.  
Keep us mindful of how precious these are,  
and how vulnerable they are.  
Help us to work together for clean water,  
and for the sharing of it with those who have need of it today.  
Amen.

**CHALICE LIGHTING BLESSING,** by Craig Rowland

As we light this chalice, may each breath remind us of the sacred rhythm of life,  
the pulse of creation, and the power we hold to shape the world around us.

**QUOTES:**

“Hunger is not a problem. It is an obscenity. How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” – Anne Frank

“There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.” – Mahatma Gandhi

**HYMN 84:** Justice for Persons (purple book)

**SHORT STORY: Anne's story (Australian Foodbank) TO BE READ BY SHEILA?**

The scary truth is it only takes one setback to push a person into the nightmare of hunger ... It happened to Queensland mum Anne. She had a stable job and had so many plans for her young children.

Through no fault of her own, Anne was pushed below the poverty line after suffering a serious injury and was forced to skip meals to make ends meet. The young mum suffered the loss of her speech and ability to walk. With no means of income and only a small disability pension, it was often only enough to pay for her therapy and medications.

Whenever she could, Anne scraped together enough for noodles, Weet-Bix, or bananas. Many times, though, she'd simply go to bed early to avoid the burning hunger or drink warm water to fill herself up. Not having enough to eat made Anne feel worthless.

"Sometimes I wouldn't eat for days, as I wanted to save what little bit of money I had left, to provide for my kids during their visits. I was often starving, but my babies would always be happy, so I decided it was worth it." – Anne

Thanks to generous supporters like you, Anne received a knock on the door that changed everything. A food hamper was placed in her arms.

"It was overwhelming. In the hamper was everything to stock my pantry full. Things like flour, sugar, cereal, spaghetti, and tinned goods. Thinking about it still makes me smile." – Anne

As the cost of living continues to rise, more and more Queensland families like Anne's are experiencing desperate hardship and are struggling to put food on the table. We need your help to get food to families like Anne's who need it most.

"Getting help to feed myself has made me realise good people are out there. Some of the nicest ones are strangers who support the work of Foodbank. It feels so good to be able to eat. Thank you!" – Anne

**VIDEO-CLIP:** [A global hunger crisis: how did we get here?](#) (video – 03:40)

**READING 1: What is the root of climate change? TO BE READ BY ANN KADER?**

And what is driving people? Materialism. Climate change is an outgrowth of materialism. It's our desire for money. It's our desire for what we want. It's the inability to discipline ourselves in places that we need. This is something we have to learn. And the first step is actually to overcome materialism and our own personal desires for as much as we want. We have to realise that we can't have everything we want. Or, we can have it, but it will cause a problem.

We can eat anything we want, but you know what? Some of those things are going to cause cancer. You can take what you want, but there are going to be outcomes for what you do. You see? So, we have to start learning about those outcomes and we have to start being able first to understand the outcomes in ourselves and choices.

**READING 2 (extract from World Health Organisation's new guidelines on fiscal policies to promote healthy diets): TO BE READ BY DELPHINE?**

The current food environment in which many people live, work, and spend their daily lives consists of highly processed and readily available foods high in unhealthy fats, sugars, and sodium. Many of these foods are also heavily marketed and relatively cheap. As a result, consumers are often challenged to make healthy food-related decisions. Unhealthy diets are now a leading global public health risk, contributing to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and cancers.

These guidelines reflect growing evidence which suggests that taxes on unhealthy foods like Sugar-Sweetened Beverages (SSBs) can lead to lower demand and consumption. Inversely, subsidies for foods that contribute to a healthy diet, such as fruits and vegetables, make these foods more accessible and affordable. This in turn encourages their consumption, leading to increased sales and positive shifts in consumer behaviour. Implementing fiscal policies based on these insights is a promising approach to nudge consumers towards better food choices, making the healthier choice the easier choice.

### **READING 3:**

Buddhism emphasises compassion and social responsibility in addressing hunger, advocating for justice and sustainable solutions to alleviate suffering. Buddhism teaches that alleviating suffering is a fundamental aspect of its philosophy. The Buddha himself recognised hunger as a significant form of suffering, stating that "Hunger is the worst illness." This perspective drives many Buddhist organisations such as Buddhist Global Relief (BGR), to engage actively in efforts to combat hunger and poverty. BGR focuses on long-term solutions, helping communities develop sustainable food sources and addressing the root causes of hunger, such as economic inequality and lack of education. Buddhism encourages looking beyond immediate symptoms to address the underlying causes of hunger. This includes advocating for social justice and transformative policies that tackle issues like conflict, economic disparity, and climate change, which are significant drivers of global hunger. The teachings of the Buddha suggest that to solve problems effectively, we must remove their root causes.

**HYMN 216:** Wide Green World (purple book)

**REFLECTIVE ADDRESS:** The Gift of Food Security and the Plague of Food Insecurity

Food is among the most ordinary realities of human life, yet it is also among the most sacred. Every culture gathers around meals. Every religion reflects on hunger, gratitude, generosity, and justice. A table can symbolise abundance, community, and celebration, such as the traditional Shia Muslim celebration on Yalda Night; but an empty table speaks of suffering, inequality, and neglect. In today's world, food security remains a gift enjoyed by some, while food insecurity continues to plague millions. This contrast challenges humanity morally and spiritually. Religious traditions across the world call people not only to gratitude for what they have, but also to responsibility toward those who hunger.

For those who live with food security, daily meals may appear routine.

Supermarkets are stocked, water flows cleanly, and waste bins overflow with

uneaten food. Yet many spiritual traditions warn against taking abundance for granted. In Judaism, food is viewed as a blessing from God and a reminder of dependence upon divine provision. Jewish tradition teaches that before eating, one should offer blessings to acknowledge that the earth's produce is sacred. The Hebrew Scriptures repeatedly command care for the poor, the widow, and the stranger. In the Book of Leviticus, farmers are instructed not to harvest every corner of their fields so that the poor may gather food for themselves. This teaching transforms food from a private possession into a shared gift. Gratitude without generosity is incomplete.

Christianity similarly places food at the centre of spiritual life. Jesus fed the hungry, ate with the marginalized, and taught his followers to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Bread in Christian teaching symbolizes both physical nourishment and spiritual sustenance. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand demonstrates compassion and abundance, but it also reveals human responsibility: the disciples are instructed to distribute the food. Christianity teaches that ignoring hunger contradicts genuine faith. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus identifies himself with the hungry, saying, "I was hungry and you gave me food." Such teachings challenge societies where excess and starvation coexist side by side.

Hinduism offers another profound perspective on food security and hunger. In Hindu thought, food is sacred because it sustains life, and life itself is divine. The phrase "Annam Brahma" means "Food is God," expressing the belief that food carries spiritual significance. Sharing food is considered an act of compassion and duty. The principle of ahimsa, or nonviolence, encourages respect for all living beings and calls for responsible and ethical use of resources. Hindu temples often provide free meals to worshippers and the poor, emphasising equality and hospitality. The tradition reminds humanity that food should unite rather than divide. When some consume excessively while others starve, harmony is broken.

African Spirituality also provides valuable wisdom on the issue of food insecurity. Traditional African worldviews emphasise interconnectedness between people, ancestors, nature, and community. Food is not merely an individual possession

but part of communal life. In many African societies, harvest celebrations express gratitude to ancestors and spirits for the fertility of the land. Sharing food with guests and neighbours is considered a moral obligation and a sign of humanity. The philosophy of Ubuntu — “I am because we are” — reflects the understanding that human well-being is collective. If one member of the community is hungry, the whole community suffers. African Spirituality challenges the individualism that often dominates modern societies and contributes to unequal distribution of resources.

Earth Spirituality deepens this reflection by emphasising humanity’s relationship with the planet itself. The earth provides enough food to sustain all people, yet environmental destruction, climate change, and exploitation threaten this balance. Earth-centered spiritual traditions teach reverence for nature and encourage sustainable living. Food insecurity is not only a social problem but also an ecological one. Deforestation, pollution, overconsumption, and waste damage ecosystems and reduce the earth’s capacity to nourish future generations. Earth Spirituality calls people to recognise the sacredness of soil, water, seeds, and biodiversity. It reminds humanity that greed and exploitation separate people from the natural harmony necessary for survival.

The reality of food insecurity today is deeply troubling. Millions suffer from hunger, malnutrition, and famine despite global wealth and technological advancement. Wars destroy farmland and supply chains. Poverty prevents families from accessing nutritious food. Climate disasters force communities into desperation. At the same time, enormous amounts of food are wasted daily in wealthier nations. This contradiction reveals that hunger is not merely the result of scarcity, but often the result of inequality and injustice.

Religious teachings consistently condemn such injustice. Judaism teaches tzedakah, the moral duty of justice and charity. Christianity calls believers to love their neighbours in practical ways. Hinduism encourages seva, selfless service to others. African Spirituality values communal responsibility, while Earth Spirituality demands respect for creation. Though these traditions differ in beliefs and

practices, they converge on one essential truth: food should never be denied to those in need.

Reflecting on food security also invites personal examination. Those who enjoy abundance must ask difficult questions. Do we waste food thoughtlessly? Do we ignore the suffering of distant communities because it feels removed from our daily lives? Do economic systems prioritise profit over human dignity? Spiritual reflection requires more than sympathy; it requires action. Supporting food banks, reducing waste, advocating for fair policies, protecting the environment, and sharing resources are practical ways of responding to hunger.

At the same time, gratitude remains essential. Food security is not guaranteed. Droughts, conflict, illness, and economic hardship can quickly disrupt stability. Religious traditions teach humility in the face of life's uncertainty. Gratitude should inspire compassion rather than complacency. A thankful heart recognises that blessings are meant to be shared.

Ultimately, the issue of food insecurity is a test of humanity's moral and spiritual values. A world where some feast while others starve cannot reflect true justice or peace. Across Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, African Spirituality, and Earth Spirituality, there is a shared call to honour the sacredness of food, care for the vulnerable, and live responsibly within creation. These teachings urge humanity to move beyond selfishness towards compassion and solidarity.

Food nourishes more than the body; it nourishes relationships, communities, and hope. When food is shared fairly, dignity is restored and human unity is strengthened. The challenge before the world is not simply to produce more food, but to cultivate greater justice, gratitude, and compassion. Only then can the gift of food security become a reality for all rather than a privilege for a few. So be it.

**MUSIC:** [Short Meditation Music - Beautiful Piano Music - Bach Prelude](#) (video – 02:50)

**POETRY:** The Bread Line (Maya Anthony). This poem paints a scene of a bread line symbolising the collective struggle against hunger and shared human experience.

In lines that stretch like morning shadows,  
Faces worn, by life's gallows,  
Hands outstretched for a piece of bread,  
In silence, their stories are said.

Eyes meet, in silent accord,  
Shared struggles, cannot be ignored,  
In the bread line, they stand,  
A testament to hunger's hand.

Each loaf, a symbol of hope,  
In hunger's steep, slippery slope,  
A line that binds them in their plight,  
Under the indifferent sunlight.

**HYMN 155:** the Day Will Come (purple book)

**CLOSING WORDS:** Hope continues, uncertain and true, like candlelight, ready to spark again. All is not lost. Our hope for a better future is more fervent than ever.

**CLOSING MUSIC:** [FAUN - Lament \(Official Video\)](#) (video – 03:57)

## **ORDER OF SERVICE**

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**CHALICE LIGHTING**

**QUOTES**

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**POETRY:** The Bread Line (Maya Anthony) **TO BE READ BY CAROLINE?**

**HYMN 155:** the Day Will Come (purple book)

**CLOSING WORDS**

**EXTINGUISHING CHALICE**

**CLOSING MUSIC:** [FAUN - Lament \(Official Video\)](#) (video – 03:57)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY SHEILA**