



World Day of Prayer 2011
'How Many Loaves Have You?'



Scriptures: 1Kings 17:1-6, Deuteronomy 8:7-10, Mark 6:30-44,

The annual World Day of Prayer service this year came to us from Chile and was led at JGHS by the Women's Fellowship. Their members used songs, costumes, props and, yes, bread to bring us a powerful message.

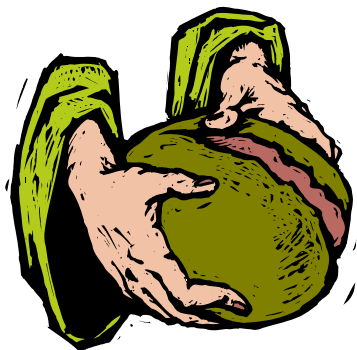
One of the key texts of the evening was 1 Kings 17:1-6. Here is an extract from the Bible Study material:

God shows himself in the small details: He chooses a woman, a widow, poor, deprived, to make Himself known outside of Israel. He is moved by the desperation of this mother and does not leave her totally destitute.

Even when this woman had no name, she did have a voice. In spite of her complicated situation, she speaks directly about the economic want in her home and compels the prophet to take action. On the basis of the prophet's promise, she moves. Trusting that God's love for her would reveal something unexpected in the midst of her poverty, she opens her heart, kneads the dough, puts the needs of the other alongside her own and those of her son. She prepares the bread for Elijah first. She gives from the last thing she has: water and bread. God becomes present through this woman's giving. She calls us to share the table, share the bread, and share her story and her destiny. She trusts that something new can happen.

Here are extracts from the service itself, part of the welcome and the closing. They represent not only the theme but also the culture of Chile.

Bread is the main food in our homes. No meal is complete without it. We show hospitality, even in the poorest homes, by sharing coffee, tea or maté and some bread. Often when women are kneading the dough, it becomes a way of expressing their affection for all who will later eat the bread. In a world where hunger is a universal disgrace and where noise prevents us from hearing the anguished voices of so many brothers and sisters around us, sharing bread is a sign of solidarity and hope in Christ. Let us listen to the question that Jesus asked his disciples: How many loaves have you? Let us take up the question for ourselves: how many loaves have we?



God offers the world abundance. Jesus Christ invites us to an inclusive table, at which there is sufficient bread for everyone. Today we are united in our faith in Jesus Christ. We share our joys and sorrows, our dreams and hopes. Together we pray with the world, for the world, in a common feeling of trust, sisterhood, brotherhood, and love.