



Weekly Resource

June 22, 2020: Hungering for a New World -- Politics 2020

Dear friends,

In the wake of so many needs and crises, we are heartened to hear the stories of folks across the country responding with passion and generosity in the name of justice and community. We stand with you in solidarity and seek to support you through our programs, weekly resources, community, and prayers.

As the conversation about racism continues in the United States, it's easy to lose sight of how the pandemic continues to ravage the vulnerable. This week's resource takes a quick look at the single most ubiquitous and perennial crisis known to the human community: hunger and food insecurity. In the teeth of the pandemic, hunger and food insecurity have reached frightening levels; it's possible that extreme hunger will double! But things are being done and they invite our participation!

This week's resource also invites us to make the linkage between human crisis and the political tools we have in our hands. Our faith makes it very clear that the vision of the beloved community we share is made possible, in part, by the values we embed in our laws and policies. Politics matters!

A logistical note: You will want to copy and email the indented information below so that group members can read them before you meet as a group:

Go to <https://www.bread.org/hunger-and-coronavirus> and look over the page, clicking on topics or articles that interest you. Spend 15 minutes reading and learning. Jot down what you find interesting and helpful.

Read the article at <https://networklobby.org/20200518newdeal/>.

A little background if you are new to our resources: we're sending them every week during the pandemic because we humans are built for love and community. You can use it to stay connected with your current and past JFM small groups or with your family and friends. Or

you can use it as an individual resource for personal prayer and learning.

In the meantime, **now is also the perfect time to start one of our regular programs**, perhaps our hunger-focused program, Hunger: A Faith and Justice Response. In case the art of videoconferencing is somewhat confusing to you, we're offering tips and tools for facilitating all of our current programs via the internet, including tutorials on how to use Zoom. The call to seek justice will not wait for this virus to end; we must act as we can!

Last but not least, generosity is, at its core, a benefit to everyone. When you donate today, your gift helps us sustain individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out](#). Also, please feel free to forward this resource to friends and family!

Stay well,
The JustFaith Ministries Staff

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

When everyone has dialed in, begin your time together with these or similar words:

Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you, despite that we can't be together in person. Today we'll begin with prayer and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll have some conversation around a couple of readings before closing in prayer. Most importantly, though, this will be a time to care for one another and to be the community we're called to be.

Let's take a few seconds of silence to pause, to listen to our breathing, and to be present in this space.

Pause for 30 seconds before beginning the opening prayer.

Dear God,

In this time of uncertainty and fear, help us be love, mercy, and peace for ourselves and for others as we face coronavirus in the United States and around the world.

Help us hold close in our hearts:

Those who have died, and their loved ones who mourn them.

Those who are sick or are trying to seek medical care.

Those who don't have paid sick leave, benefits, or job security.

Those whose schools have closed and don't have access to food, safe homes, or technology.

Those can't travel to be with loved ones who are ill or dying.

Those who are facing discrimination and harassment because of their ethnicity.

Those who are struggling with loneliness during this time of social isolation.

Those who are frightened and losing hope.

Help us find joy, however small it seems.

Help us remain hopeful.

Help us remember that “All shall be well, for there is a force of love moving through the universe that holds us fast and will never let us go.”

Amen

(from the website of Network, <https://networklobby.org/03132020coronavirus/>)

Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)

Ask these open-ended questions. If you are by yourself, journal about them.

Note: If you're with a group, these questions have the potential to take up a lot of time. Some weeks may require more check-in time than others, depending on the needs of the group. To provide a shorter yet meaningful check-in time, choose ONE of the questions below, and ask participants to share a ONE sentence response.

- **Before we begin this week's reflection, let's take a few minutes to check in. How is everyone feeling?** (It will be a bit more difficult via phone to know if someone is being talked over or is trying to get a word in.... Be sure everyone has a chance to speak).
- **What is something you're struggling with this week?**
- **Where have you seen a sign of hope this week?**

Other optional questions include: What is something you've learned about yourself during this time of social distancing? Where have you experienced a "thin place" in the last week? Where have you seen beauty this week? What is one new behavior you'd like to continue doing when the virus has passed us by?

Reflection (15 minutes or so)

Participants were invited in advance to look over the link to the Bread for the World page on the impact of the coronavirus on hunger (<https://www.bread.org/hunger-and-coronavirus>) and to spend 10 minutes reading some of the resources and links on that page.

Discussion questions:

1. Please share with the group any highlights from what you read that you think would be valuable to the group.
2. What did you find particularly compelling?
3. What action steps can you see yourself making?

Participant were also asked to read an article on Network's website: <https://networklobby.org/20200518newdeal/>, underscoring the importance of politics in crafting a new social reality.

Discussion questions:

1. What did you find of particular interest in this article?
2. The author begins his article with these words, "We are at a national turning point." Do you believe this to be true? Why?
3. Do you find yourself inclined to get involved in this year's election campaign?
4. Share your conviction about the link between faith and political action.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes-ish)

Then say: Before we join in the closing prayer, let us pause to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is as close as our very breath.

Pause for 30 seconds

Let us pray.

May you know tender shelter and healing blessing when you are called to stand in the place of pain.

May the places of darkness within you be surprised by light.

May you be granted the wisdom to avoid false resistance and when suffering knocks on the door of your life, may you be able to glimpse its hidden gift.

May you be able to see the fruits of suffering.

May memory bless and shelter you with the hard-earned light of past turmoil, to remind you that you have survived before, And though the darkness is now deep, You will soon see approaching light.

May this give you confidence and trust.

May a window of light always surprise you.

May the grace of transfiguration heal your wounds.

AMEN.

(From “A Blessing Prayer in Difficult Times” by John O’Donohue)

Invite participants to share a prayer with these words:

We are disciples on a journey.

We are the body of Christ, broken for the world.

We hold one another as we carry the concerns of our neighbors.

If you feel moved, please share a prayer aloud.

After participants have shared, close with these words:

We pray also for the members of the JustFaith community across the country. Unite us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that together we might participate with you in the building of your Kingdom, in order to create a more just and peaceful world. Amen.