

Lectionary Connection | SUNDAY, MARCH 21

John 12:1-8 *Mary Anoints Jesus*

In the wake of the global economic crisis, which dealt a major set back to the world's recent achievements in poverty reduction, Jesus' rather callous statement, "You always have the poor with you," rings particularly true. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus immediately follows up this assertion with an invitation to show kindness to the poor whenever we can (see Mark 14:7). In so doing, Jesus makes a clear reference to Deuteronomy 15:11, where God commands the Israelites: "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land."

And there is still another way to read this text, courtesy of our brothers and sisters in Latin America. When Jesus says, "You always have the poor with you," he is not simply offering some dark forecast of poverty until the end of time. Rather, Jesus is giving a command, telling his followers to be sure that they always have those who are poor and oppressed beside them and, likewise, to always be on their side. This week, how can we walk with with those who are poor and vulnerable?

40-day Lenten Calendars

ELCA WORLD HUNGER 40-DAY CALENDAR

This calendar invites you to pray, learn, give, and deepen your commitment to hunger throughout the 40 days of Lent. It pairs well with an ELCA World Hunger coin box.

Order the calendar (free; 1 pkg = 25; 978-6-0002-2015-0) and the coin box (free; 1 pkg = 25; 978-6-0002-2004-4) through Augsburg Fortress by visiting the online store at www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger or by calling 800-328-4648.



LIVING SIMPLY WITH GOD

This online calendar challenges you to live thoughtfully, simply, and joyfully throughout the 40 days of Lent. Download the calendar at www.elca.org/hunger/simple.



Lenten Activities

- Share a meal as a congregation before Lenten services on Wednesdays. Create placemats which include facts and figures about world hunger and use them to guide discussion and reflection during the meal. Suggest a \$5 or \$10 donation per plate to benefit ELCA World Hunger.
- Instead of giving up something during Lent, encourage members of your congregation to add something to their weekly schedule. Create a small group that will organize group activities—like volunteering, studying, or praying.
- Distribute ELCA World Hunger 40-day calendars to help members continue daily reflection at home.