

Official Prayer of the Congress

God our Father,
we bless you and give you thanks
for your Son Jesus, the gift of your love
for the life of the world.

Watch over your Church as it celebrates in joy and hope
the 49th International Eucharistic Congress.

Renew our faith in the Holy Eucharist,
the memorial of your Son's death and resurrection.

May your Holy Spirit shed its light upon us
and grant us strength
to serve as faithful witnesses to the Gospel.

Nourish us with your Word and your Bread of Life
So that united with Mary,
the Mother of your Divine Son and Mother of the Church,
we will bear much fruit
for the salvation of the world.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



The Catholic Women's League of Canada



Spiritual Program

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE



Edmonton Diocesan Executive
Mid-Winter Meeting

Saturday, February 2, 2008
Holy Family Parish, St. Albert
Alberta

I am the Bread of Life

SONG: With this bread by Kate Cuddy

With this bread we will walk with each other,
With this cup we will follow the Lord
Compassion, love overflowing,
God's love ever knowing, we share in it our song.

GOSPEL READING: John 6:30-35

So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." ' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

The gospel of the Lord.

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD:

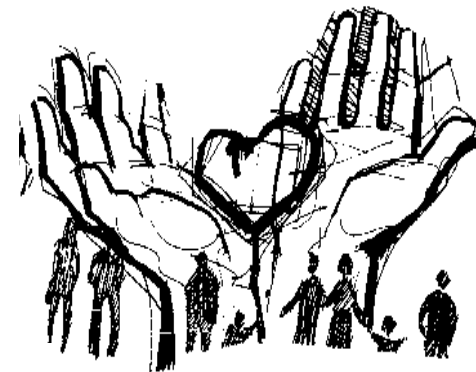
Bread is still the staff of life in our culture. Along with rice, it is food for the common people, It is food for all people. It is a rich symbol in the Judeo-Christian tradition. There are many kinds of breads - both leavened and unleavened bread, bread of all shapes and sizes. In our daily life, we rub shoulders with people of all cultures and nationalities, and people of different beliefs and spiritualities.



CLOSING PRAYER Love one another

ALL: Ever-loving God,
Creator of each human being in your image and likeness,
Help us to see the face of Christ in friends and stranger alike.
Give us an open listening minds and an understanding ears,
so that we may be true companions to everyone we meet
as we answer Christ's call to "Love one Another".
May your Holy Spirit guide our thoughts and actions and those
of all our sisters in the Catholic Women's League of Canada
so that through us your light will illumine our world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and Lord.
AMEN

ALL: 49th International Eucharistic Congress Prayer (back cover)



CLOSING PRAYER:

Let us pray...

ALL: God we remember the manna in the desert, given daily as an ongoing sign of your care. We recall soberly how, even though you always gave enough, our ancestors wanted more than enough, so they hoarded it and it became rotten and inedible.

We remember Emmaus, where the breaking of bread became the moment of recognition of your presence. Your disciples invited you to "come and eat" and you responded with the gift of yourself.

We remember Jesus feeding the more than 5,000 when the disciples wanted to send them home hungry.

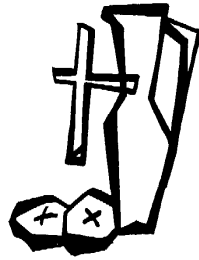
This bread is the sign of life, of sharing and fulfillment. It is a sign today of the gift of self we can bring to life. You are alive and working in us. We acknowledge your power and presence. We promise to bring this giftedness to our Church and communities.

ALL: Lord, our God, you have sown in us your word, given us your son - he who was broken and died for us, is bread and life for the world.

We ask you to let us find strength to tread his path, to let us be for each other as fertile as seed and as nourishing as bread.

Help us to be leaders of hope in our world. AMEN

LEAGUE PRAYER



Jesus is the Bread of Life for us. We too are bread for one another, bread for the life of the world.

We come together this morning to share and rejoice in our works for God and Canada. We reflect on the meaning of bread for each one of us, personally and in our ministries. In our calling to bring Christ to the world, we are meant to be a leaven bread that rises in all directions with a healing presence.

Part of this noble task is to help others discover the hint of eternity that flows through the inner rivers of their very being. This hint of eternity nurtures hope. And hope is contagious. Hope is like the yeast and baking powder. It has the energy to make things rise. If you want to know if you are good for others, ask yourself how much hope you've given them. It is there that you will find the answer.

RESPONSARIAL SONG: With this Bread

Whole Wheat Bread: Leavened bread, bread with yeast in it, is given ample time and warmth for the yeast to grow. We remember those who come from families favoured with stable homes and enough food to eat. We pray they will grow in their commitment to use their gifts to nourish the world... R

Loaf with a Cross on it: We raise up now, a loaf of bread with a cross upon it. This bread signifies the faith journey of the CWL sisterhood, the faith journey of those who have long been believers, as well as those who are new to the faith; the faith journey of those in doubt and those who struggle with faith; the faith journey of those who are spiritual guides for other. We ask God's blessing on all faith communities...

R

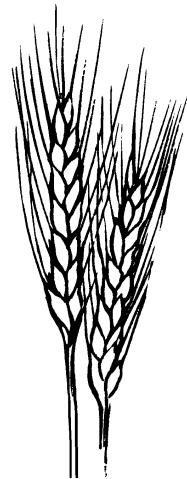
Rye Bread: Rye bread is the staple bread of the laboring class in much of Eastern



Europe. This bread represents for us all workers, all who are unemployed and seeking jobs, all who are discriminated against in wages and kinds of work because of their gender, race, religion or ethnic origin. Let us pray for justice for all who labour in our communities... R

Rice: In antiquity, rice was often very rare and treasured. It was kept for medicinal purposes. These rice cakes remind us of all those people who have come to us with special needs and all who work to minister to them. Let us pray for the gift of compassion for all those who work with these individuals and for their families who care for them daily at home... R

Unleavened Bread (Matzo): Unleavened bread calls to mind all those who were refugees—those who, like the Israelites at the time of Moses, have had to leave their homes and flee the land of their birth. May we as leaders in our faith, hunger and thirst for justice for all... R



Tortillas: Tortillas remind us of our brothers and sisters who are caught in conflicts; those who suffer in abusive family conflicts, those who are bereaved, those who struggle with divorce and those trying their best to blend. We pray that we may be instruments of healing in their lives... R

Nutbread: Nutbread represents those who, for various reasons, are considered “nutty” by the many in our world. They may be bag ladies and street people. The unconventional, the fools for Christ, the mentally ill, those who are judged ‘abnormal’ because of sexual stereotyping; those who are dreamers, visionaries and prophets amongst us. Let us pray that we may be leaders in the creation of a spirit of openness and hospitality towards all people that come into our lives... R



Crackers: Saltines represent the elderly folks in our lives - the salty ones. Those who have endured; those who have learned wisdom; those who have become fatigued and perhaps fragile, at the end of their ministry. May the Holy Spirit teach us to value their wisdom, to treat them gently when they have grown fragile... R

Gingerbread: Gingerbread, spicy bread, reminds us of all those individuals who do more than nourish us, those who bring spice into our lives.

We are thankful for them. We pray that we too will be open to the ways that God is calling us to be spice for others... R

Shortbread: Shortbread brings to mind our children. This bread is a reminder to us of the little ones among us and all the wonderful people who have dedicated their lives to their instruction. May we be ever mindful of our call to be stewards of the gospel for the future generation... R

Pita Bread: Pita bread is bread that can be opened to hold food. It speaks to the capacity that we all have within us, the capacity to hold the treasures of life. Let us pray for the grace to be empty like the pita bread so we can be filled with the gift of God’s love for one another... R

BLESSING:

Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. Let it become the bread of life for us today. AMEN

