

Give the Gift of Calories for Life!



IT'S SHOCKING!

Have you ever found two letters with conflicting messages in your mailbox on the very same day?

One tells you how you can burn the extra calories you have consumed, which are making you fat and ruining your life, without changing your diet or lifestyle.

The other has a photo of an emaciated child whose bulging eyes stare out at you from the embrace of an imploring mother's skeletal arms and asks you for a donation.

This scandalous and absurd contrast can provoke mixed feelings of anger, indignation and powerlessness. "It's unbearable! Why isn't the government doing something about this? I certainly can't do anything to help these people all by myself."

Appeals for help often make us uncomfortable, and we also resent the way that they intrude on our lives. Yet to ignore them entirely just makes us even more hardened and indifferent. It is impossible to block them out completely. It does not help simply to bemoan the sorry state of affairs and then to move along on our way as quickly as possible. It doesn't even help us to feel better.

But there is something we can do. Let's take a closer look.

A PARADOXICAL SITUATION

We see that:

On the one hand, the media are full of advertisements for a vast array of more or less expensive methods and products that are supposed to help us lose the excess calories we have consumed and stockpiled. For example, in Switzerland, almost half of the population is now overweight. While some diseases can lead to excess weight gain, in most cases this is the result of eating too many calories.

The overabundance of food, much of which is of low nutritional value, and the frequency of between-meal snacking lead to the same result: the scale goes up, and then we look for ways to burn the unpleasant excess calories as fast as we can. Eating too many calories weighs down and even deforms our bodies, puts stress on our hearts and wears out our joints.

On the other hand, there are those who have to scrounge for their meals, suffering atrociously in situations of famine that slowly and inexorably lead to painful death. There are men, women and children who have been sentenced to starve to death.

On the one hand, our excess calorie consumption is unhealthy and can lead to or aggravate many life-threatening diseases and conditions.

And on the other, people who consume too few calories will suffer a slow death from starvation.

This is our paradoxical and scandalous situation. It is not, however, inevitable.

There is something that we can all do.

GIVE THE GIFT OF CALORIES!

In practical terms, we propose that you do not eat one meal, preferably dinner, each week and that you give the amount of money equal to what you would have spent on this meal to the famine relief charity of your choice.

It is true that the very idea of limiting your caloric intake, even quite modestly, can bring with it a sense of lack, deprivation or disagreeable frustration. The idea of fasting can seem so unpleasant that we try to avoid it by imagining that it is out-of-date or unwarranted, despite the fact that it has long been an important practice in some religions and healthy-living approaches.

It is also true that freely giving a gift to another does not diminish us or make us frustrated. A gift-giver enjoys the act of giving, experiencing it not as a painful loss but rather as something that brings joy to the giver and receiver alike.

Similarly, anyone who donates blood willingly accepts the discomfort involved because this gift helps its recipient. What is important here is not the loss of one's own blood but instead the giving of a gift that can save someone else's life.



A LITTLE COMMON SENSE...

The human body is highly adaptable and can easily handle it when there is a longer-than-usual time between two meals. Of course, anyone who decides to skip an evening meal should be sure to get enough nourishment at breakfast and lunch.

In the evening, it is important to drink plenty of water and stay hydrated, especially during warm weather.

Those who have diabetes, eating disorders, serious illnesses or who are under a doctor's care and so on should avoid skipping meals, in order not to interfere with any ongoing treatment and recovery. However, if you do happen to fall into one of these categories, there are many other ways to express your compassion for people who are suffering from famine.

A HELPFUL EXPERIENCE

When I decide not to eat dinner, I have to go to bed on an empty stomach. This can be uncomfortable, involving noticeable rumblings of protest coming from my belly. Our insides are afraid of hunger pangs and ask to be fed. However, if we listen closely, it is less about being hungry and more about a simple craving or urge to eat. The body can easily go for several hours without food.

My sense of frustration is short-lived, because it won't be long before I'll be able to eat my fill.

Yet this fast gives me the chance, however briefly or superficially, to have compassion for (literally, "to suffer along with") those who will have nothing to eat tomorrow, the next day, or the days to come.

It is at that moment that I can feel how unacceptable and scandalous it is that, on this planet overflowing with food and wealth, so many people are tortured by hunger, often to the point of death. It becomes obvious that fighting hunger should be a priority.

By giving the equivalent of one of my meals to a famine relief charity, I will not be giving away something that I do not need to help others, as is so often the case.

Instead, I will have the real experience (limited as it may be) of sharing something necessary for life (my food) with someone who is facing death. This allows me to have true sympathy (a word that means “suffering together”) for others. When I offer these calories, which I have chosen not to eat, to those who do not have enough of them, I feel an inner joy.

Further, by choosing to drink water – just tap water – rather than eating this meal, I come to have a better appreciation of what a privilege it is to have ready access to good tasting, fresh clear water that is clean and safe. I relish this crystalline water, which is there for me, without limits.

This experience leads me to think about how many people only have access to dirty, cloudy, disease-causing water, or no water at all.

This, in turn, makes me even more sharply aware of the vital and pressing need to share this precious substance, which is necessary for life, with my brothers and sisters. This is something that could be done by working to provide people with simple and effective access to safe water.

THE NEXT FEW DAYS...

The morning after a day when I have skipped dinner brings with it a nice surprise. At breakfast, I find that I am no more hungry than usual, and I also feel present, alert, and light of body and mind.

In the days that come, I become more aware of what I am eating. I start to regain control over certain habits that had become automatic: my constant between-meal snacking and so on. I am overcoming my fear of lack. I am gradually freed from my inadequate and tyrannical efforts to try to cover over all my frustration, disappointment and anxiety by stuffing myself with food.

I also find that I enjoy what I eat more, because I have come to understand what a privilege it is to have a plate of food. My meals are filled with gratitude because I have become more mindful and aware that food is precious and not to be taken for granted.

SOME FOOD, PLEASE!

Food is a basic need that constantly occupies our thought, action, and resources, with the purpose of keeping us alive. Our nutritional choices reveal how we come together as a community. For example, are we more concerned with stockpiling for ourselves or sharing with others? This involves our spiritual life.

For Christians, there is a question that is becoming more and more urgent.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, what is the meaning of the words "Give us this day our daily bread"? It's certainly different from saying "Give me the bread I need every day!" There is a communal aspect to the Lord's Prayer, for it asks that every member of God's family be fed. It implies an awareness that each day's food is a blessing and that there is no guarantee that we will always and forever be entitled to adequate nutrition.

When we pray, are we trying to remind God to uphold His basic obligations (a father should always take care of his children), or do we rely on Him to take care of everything without our having to do anything ourselves? What if we were instead to believe that God is counting on us to take care of each other? Would that imply that we must try to shoulder the crushing burden of an infinite responsibility?

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This would be a good moment to recall that we are not, thank heavens, the saviors of the world! Yet each of us can give a response that no one else can, a response that is, literally, our personal responsibility.

When we pray not just with our words but also with our bodies, we become engaged in our prayer in a different and deeper way. Prayer and action come together.

The way in which each of us can take action in this world, which God loves and holds in His hand, becomes clearer and more concrete.

WILL IT WORK?

It may seem that, given the immensity of the problem, foregoing one meal per week for the sake of helping the hungry is merely a token gesture.

We should ask an essential question: will this really do anything?

When the disciples feared that the multitudes who had gathered to hear Jesus speak would not have enough food to eat, Jesus said, “you give them something to eat.” What a surprising reply from someone whom they relied on to provide everything! They had only five loaves of bread and two fish, but, by the grace of God, these were able to feed 5,000 men and their families. God Himself may be omnipotent, but He has chosen to make us get involved and lend a hand.

God can take something small that is freely and joyously given and make it be fruitful and multiply far beyond what we are able to calculate or imagine.



DARE TO DREAM...

If you were to decide, starting today, to skip one meal per week and donate the amount you would have spent on it to a famine relief charity; if, during the first month after you made this decision, you were to convince two other people to do the same thing; if each of these two people, during their first months of skipping a meal, went on to convince two others to do this, and so on, what would happen?

In twelve months, about 4,000 people (or even families, depending on the case) could be saved from starvation. In twenty-four months, this number would rise to 16 million people, and, after thirty-four months, to more than four billion!

In short, it would take less than three years to put an end to starvation on Earth.

This could be accomplished without any extra spending.

No one would have to pay a penny more than usual. All it takes is a small gift of calories.



BE REALISTIC !

By donating the amount of money that would have been spent on one dinner per week, you can save the life of a person or even a family and keep them from dying of starvation. Why not start today?

What a privilege it is to be able to do something concrete yourself, without relying on government decisions or slow-moving institutions and without just having to stand by and watch as the world's misery continues to worsen.

There are certainly many, many other ways to oppose the great injustice, violence and suffering of this world.

This proposal does not rely on anyone other than ourselves, will not strain our (generally quite limited) budgets, can be undertaken immediately... and will save lives!

ONE PERSON'S "LOSS" ... CAN REALLY BE ANOTHER'S GAIN !

By donating calories that you have decided not to consume to those who desperately need them, you will gain a deep sense of the joy of sharing. This inner joy will be renewed as each week passes, and this is what allows us to make and keep a long-term commitment.

Your body, which frequently suffers from an excess of calories, will appreciate having a weekly break from taking in food that is not really needed. It won't take long for you to see the benefits that this will have on your system.

You can thus simultaneously ease the suffering of a hungry person and feel better yourself.

For these reasons, we invite you to join us in giving the gift of calories for life!



MAKE A COMMITMENT

Please fill in and detach the form on the next page and send it to:

Association “Des Calories pour la Vie”

Route du Zéphyr 7
1817 Brent (Switzerland)

or use the online form on our website at:

www.descaloriespurlavie.ch

Then, whenever you're ready, make a gift of the amount of money you've saved to the charitable organization of your choice that provides famine relief through emergency response or ongoing health care, preventative, education, development or similar support.

Keep for your records:

I/We are committed to participating for the period from to

If you are not sure where to direct your donation, here are four examples of reputable charities in Switzerland:



EPER
Pain pour le prochain.

EPER Entraide Protestante Suisse

Siège romand, 1001 Lausanne

IBAN: CH61 0900 0000 1000 1390 5

Reference: 222085 - Des Calories pour la Vie

www.eper.ch

CARITAS
Agir, tout simplement

Schweiz
Suisse
Svizzera
Svizra

Caritas

Adligenswilerstrasse 15, CP, 6002 Lucerne

IBAN: CH69 0900 0000 6000 7000 4

Reference: Des Calories pour la Vie

www.caritas.ch



chaque vie compte

Medair

Chemin du Croset 9, 1024 Ecublens VD

IBAN: CH69 0900 0000 1000 0648 6

Reference: Des Calories pour la Vie

www.medair.org



HELVETAS

Helvetas

Chemin de Balxert 7-9, 1219 Châtelaine

IBAN: CH42 0900 0000 1000 1133 7

Reference: Des Calories pour la Vie

www.helvetas.ch

MY/OUR COMMITMENT

I/We hereby make the commitment to skip one meal per week

- ☐ for a period of 1 month
- ☐ for a period of 3 months
- ☐ for a period of months

beginning on and continuing until

and to offer the amount of money that would have been spent on these meals to the famine relief charity of my/our choice.

I/We promise to follow through on this commitment to the best of my ability.

This commitment can be renewed if I/we so desire.

First Name(s):

Last Name(s):

Address:

Email:

Date:

Signature(s):





TO CONTACT US

We would be happy to receive any questions, feedback or suggestions you may have.

Association «Des Calories pour la Vie»

Marc Subilia, Pastor and Physician

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1817 Brent (Switzerland)

info@descaloriespourelavie.ch

www.descaloriespourelavie.ch

www.facebook.com/descaloriespourelavie

A State-Approved Charity

TO ORDER COPIES OF THE BROCHURE

By Post:

Association «Des Calories pour la Vie»

Route du Zéphyr 7

1817 Brent (Suisse)

By Internet:

You can also use the contact form on our website at
www.descaloriespouurlavie.ch

A QR bulletin will be provided with your shipment.

IBAN: CH13 0900 0000 1488 1546 9

A gift to this account will help with our printing and distribution costs.

BROCHURE ORDER FORM

I would like to receive copies of this brochure at a cost of 6 CHF each (shipping included).

For 10 copies or more, the price is 4 CHF per copy (shipping included).

First Name:

Last Name:

Address:

Email:

Date:

Signature:



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Impressum:

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Graphic Design: pixandnet Stéphanie Tapsoba

Printer: Atelier Grand SA – Printer and Publisher

English Translation: John Holland

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