

Bread for the World warns of ongoing hunger

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Grim realities about hunger worldwide are detailed in "Foreign Aid to End Hunger," a new report issued by Bread for the World Institute in Washington.

The report urges President Bush and Congress to allocate an additional \$1 billion a year in U.S. development aid for Africa, "where hunger is deep, pervasive and widespread."

In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 186 million in all are malnourished, it says. About 291 million people live on less than \$1 a day, and every third person is chronically undernourished, it says.

The report, released March 21 by the sister institution of the Christian citizen's anti-hunger movement Bread for the World, also was sponsored by 14 other religious

and development assistance organizations, including Catholic Relief Services.

The report includes stories that give a glimpse into the depth of hunger in Africa. Along with the horrors of seeing children dying of starvation comes the tale of a woman who engaged in prostitution so she could feed her children.

The unnamed woman, who lives in the town of Pemba in southern Zambia, was discovered by Joseph Kalungu Sampa, assistant coordinator of the Structural Adjustment Policy Monitoring Project in Lusaka, Zambia.

In his essay, "Sex for Food," Sampa said he asked the woman how she made a liv-



ing. She replied that after her husband died in 1994, she had tried and exhausted every other way she knew to provide food for her 13- and 6-year-old children.

"She paused, looked down with a clenched fist, hit her chest and said, 'Against my own will, against my faith, I became a walker (prostitute). I slept with men for money,'" he wrote.

She told Sampa that at first it "tormented" her but that today she does it with "less difficulty."

"As long as I can afford a meal for my family, I am happy. I know that one day sooner or later I will die of AIDS," she said, on the verge of tears. "But I can tell you that I find hunger more deadly than AIDS."

Another contributor to the report, the Rev. John F. Schultz, a Presbyterian clergyman who is president of the Christian Children's Fund, told of going to the remote village of Jello Dida, Ethiopia.

"The village was hushed, like a hospital ward. Many of the people were in the last stages of starvation. They had received no international aid," Rev. Schultz wrote.

"In one home, a widow whose daughter had died the week before was cradling another daughter in her arms. Her son was lying on the floor wrapped in what would likely become his burial shroud. They had had nothing to eat for days and were on the brink of death."

The Christian Children's Fund dispatched a truck from the nearest village, where it was operating a feeding program.



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Dee Valone raises her hands in prayer at the "Survivor" mission March 14 at Guardian Angels Parish in Henrietta.

Lent: a time for retreats

Lenten retreats rarely break new ground. Among their time-honored lessons are: "God loves you," "Be a peacemaker," and "Go and evangelize."

Then why do literally thousands of Catholics across the diocese show up at churches for Lenten retreats night after night?

"It's Lent," said Grace Schneider, who went with her husband, Jerry, to a Holy Name of Jesus retreat in Greece March 13. "It's kind of traditional for the parish."

Activities at the retreats — or missions as some call them — include preaching, witnessing, singing, healing services, anointing for mission, learning and praying.

During Lent these things are all the more meaningful, said Linda Krist of St. Leo's Parish in Hilton. She and her husband, Gene, heard the longtime national team of Father Jack Rathschmidt, OFM Cap., and Gaynell Cronin, preach at their own church during Mass and a retreat. Then the Kristes went to Holy Name March 13 to hear Redemptorist Father Tim Keating, for-

mer director of Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua.

"It's too bad they're all on the same weekend," she said of the mission talks.

"Lent calls us into the desert. In the desert we need an oasis," commented Rosemary Bloise, pastoral associate at St. Mary Our Mother Parish in Horseheads. She added that while the topics of Lenten retreats are not new, "I think 90 percent of it is in the way it is presented."

Some missions feature speakers from the diocese.

"There are so many good people in the diocese, you don't always have to go far for someone to give a good retreat or mission," said Joann White, catechetical leader at Holy Name of Jesus.

Other missions bring in big names like youth minister Bob McCarty, peace activist Father Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, family expert Kathleen Chesto, or composer Grayson Warren Brown.

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STORY BY KATHLEEN SCHWAR • PHOTO BY ANDREA DIXON