The best way to fill your belly

By Chaplain Michael Chaney

Hunger hurts. It's estimated that 12 million children and 19 million adults in the United States can't afford food. If you have ever encountered a hungry child, you have never forgotten it. The numbers become inconsequential when even one child has to go to bed hungry.

Hunger hurts. The children of Israel in the book of Exodus found themselves in a wilderness without food. They went so far as to tell Moses they wished they had died, *"By the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt." They turned on Moses. "You've gotten us into this! You're the one who brought us out here to kill us with hunger!"*

Hunger hurts. The hunger they experienced wiped out their ability to even think rationally. It is as though they had forgotten the God who had broken their bonds of slavery and astonishingly rescued them from the Egyptian army. At that point scripture says, *"Israel saw the great work that the lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the lord and believed in the lord and in his servant Moses."* [Ex.14:31] But, now, in their physical hunger they lost heart, faith was diminished and reality was distorted. Now they recall Egypt as a place of plenty where we, *"...ate our fill of bread,"* they said. In their hunger, they remember the hell-hole they just left as heaven.

We tend to lose sight of God when life overwhelms us. It is unfortunate that we forget that it is God who carries us through the difficult times. It is all too convenient to remember that life unfolds at our pleasure when everything is working without any degree of difficulty.

If physical hunger hurts, spiritual hunger hurts even more. If spiritual hunger were worn on the outside as physical hunger is, we would be horrified. Imagine being able to see, hatred, violent hearts or murderous intent. What if the aimlessness and restlessness of a generation without spiritual foundations could be seen with our physical eyes?

Although we do not see this physical hunger with our physical eyes, the consequences are all around us. They show up as headlines in the newspaper and the top story on the evening news. When the children of Israel journeyed in the wilderness, their physical hunger was a doorway through which they could discover satisfaction of their spiritual hunger. It was in trusting in God as "sole provider" that they were to learn the meaning of satisfaction and contentment.

The people who followed Moses into the wilderness would encounter the provision of God as they were fed by manna from heaven which sustained their physical lives. Generations later, their descendants would once again come looking for physical bread. And they would be invited to a feast that would fill more than their stomachs — it could possibly sustain their souls.

The first step in Christian discipleship is an encounter with Jesus Christ. We still approach our savior God by simply asking for food for the moment. When the crowds came to Jesus out of desire for physical bread, he pointed them to something deeper which they had a hard time understanding. To this day we fail to see beyond the moment when our fast for Christ becomes our burden that our Savior will bear, if we will only ask.

"Don't be swayed by the feast of the moment," said Christ. *"Remember to look for the food that will last a lifetime. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry."*

Heads Up Yokosuka

Community Announcements

UMUC Asia Orkand Family Military Book Awards - University of Maryland University College Asia (UMUC Asia) is offering the Orkand Family Military Book Awards for active duty enlisted service members. Through this book award program active duty enlisted service members attending UMUC Stateside, Europe, and Asia can apply to receive a $100 award to help pay for textbooks. The awards will be available for the fall sessions and applications are being accepted now. For application and eligibility requirement, log on to http://www.asia.umuc.edu/finaid/orkand.cfm. Please contact your local field representative or the UMUC Asia Financial Aid Office for questions or information regarding available financial aid programs.

CFAY PWD Adopt-A-Monument Eco-volunteer Program – CFAY Public Works Department Environmental Division is looking for eco-volunteers for the Adopt-A-Monument Program. There are more than 20 historical monuments on base that need routine attention. Eco-volunteers will be responsible for picking up debris and weeding the monument area at least once a month from March through September. Call 243-5136/4100/9578 or e-mail to Ryouko.Araki.JA@navfacfe.navy.mil for more information.

Tobacco Cessation Classes at USNH Yokosuka – U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka now offers the American Cancer Society's Freshstart tobacco cessation program. It consists of four weekly one-hour group sessions that provide important quitting information and strategies. Any hospital beneficiary, active duty, retired, spouse or family member, interested in getting help with quitting tobacco use should contact Paul Langrehr at 243-7137 or HM2 Jemuelle Magat at 243-5026 or send an e-mail to paul.langrehr@med.navy.mil or jemuelle.magat@med.navy.mil.

Fleet Check-in at USNH Yokosuka – Now through Aug. 31, U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka is holding a weekly fleet check-in for all hospital beneficiaries. From 9-11 a.m. on Mondays. Beneficiaries should bring their medical records, sponsor's orders, family entry approval and command sponsorship letter to the command auditorium on the third floor of the hospital for a one-stop check-in to medical records, dental, preventive medicine and the TRICARE service center. Call 243-5252/046-816-5252 for more information.