



MARIA ANNA BRUNNER

October 1, 1764 --- January 15, 1836

Maria Anna Brunner responded to the needs of people in her nineteenth-century world. In doing so she attracted other women who generously helped her in this good work. CPPS women today are the twenty-first-century counterparts of Maria Anna Brunner and her followers. Today's Sisters, as did their Foundress, pledge themselves to proclaim the Gospel by living lives rooted in Eucharistic prayer and by serving the marginalized and the oppressed in our fractured world.

PREPARATION: Arrange a centerpiece of candles, flowers and an empty basket to be a bread container. Have nine different types of bread available for the nine participants to place in the baskets.

OPENING SONG: "Pan de Vida" (or another song that uses the theme of *bread*) from OCP Publishers

SCRIPTURE: John 6: 1-15

RESPONSE: Jesus provided bread for the needs of the gathered Galilean crowd. His resources were a generous lad with two fish and five barley loaves; his ministers — the men and women who served and gathered. *Where /how are people hungry today? How can we the People of God respond?*

READING FROM "NOT WITH SILVER OR GOLD": (p. 13) "The light and warmth of Frau Brunner's boundless charity radiated far beyond the confines of her own home. Its beneficent rays filtered into the cold, forlorn hut of many a poverty-stricken family, bringing comfort and succor when they were most needed. With good reason was she called *Mother*, not only by her own devoted six [children], but by the people of the neighborhood. She literally mothered all the children of the poor for miles around. Scarcely ever did she go on a journey without returning penniless, yet always rich in the happiness and satisfaction that come from having gone about doing good. Sometimes ... the poor would be seen coming up the mountain, twenty strong, with sacks and jugs to carry home bread, milk, and other substantial foods which their kind benefactress would provide."

ACTIVITY: Blessing of many breads (Adapted from papers entitled: *Liturgies of Solidarity* by Dianne Neu)

We bring various breads to this prayer symbolizing people and their needs. Each participant places a specific type of bread in the basket centerpiece.

First Person: I bring a slice of rye bread to our prayer basket. It is the staple bread of the laboring class. Let it represent for us all women as we work to become powerful enough to be free. Let it symbolize for us all who are unemployed and seeking jobs so they can claim the power needed to use their gifts. Let it remind us of women who are discriminated against in wages and work because they are women.

All: FILL US WITH POWER

Second Person: I bring a rice cake to our prayer basket. Rice in antiquity was in many places very rare and treasured, thus it was kept for medicinal uses. Let this rice cake stand for women and men who are ill, especially those living with debilitating diseases. Let it represent those who do the work of healing. Let it remind us of the healing that is needed because of the rejection, pain and hurt many of our people feel from family, friends, church and society.

All: FOR THEIR POWER IS FROM A LIVING GOD

Third Person: I bring a piece of sourdough bread to our prayer basket. It has as its leavening agent a small amount of dough kept from the last batch. Thus we hold in mind our mothers, our grandmothers our female ancestors — those whose life blood we have in our veins — those women who hungered for the power to make a difference.

All: LIBERATION IS A RISING AGENT

Fourth Person: I bring flatbread to our prayer basket. It calls to mind refugees and exiles who have had to flee from their homelands. Let it also represent women, especially our lesbian sisters, who have often had to flee from family, friends, work place, children and country. Let it represent the people around the world who are in refugee camps.

All: LIBERATION IS THE ABILITY TO MAKE CHANGES

Fifth Person: I bring a tortilla to our prayer basket. It symbolizes most immediately Latin American women, especially those caught in the conflicts in Central America. Let it also symbolize all people who suffer in war and those who live in fear who are bereaved. Let it bless those who are peacemakers.

All: MAY THEY BE FREE TO SAY, “NO MORE!”

Sixth Person: I bring a slice of nutbread that signifies those who, because they are incomprehensible to the majority of us, are often considered *crazy* in our society. Some of these people are homeless; some are women and men who are judged *abnormal* because of rigid sexual stereotyping; some of these persons are mentally ill. Let this slice of nutbread also symbolize the dreamers, the visionaries, the prophets within all womankind.

All: MAY THEIR GIFT OF FREEDOM BE RELEASED

Seventh Person: I bring saltine crackers to the prayer basket. Let these saltines represent the elderly, the *salty ones*. They are our own owls and crones; they are the ones who have endured; they are the ones who have learned wisdom; they are the fragile ones.

All: THESE WOMEN ASK US TO TAKE OUR FREEDOM AND TO VALUE IT SO WE MAY CLAIM WOMEN AS CHURCH.

Eighth Person: I bring a square of corn bread to our prayer basket. Cornbread represents our black sisters and brothers who are oppressed by racism, sexism and unjust structures. Let this cornbread represent further the people of all races and cultures who have been enslaved by injustice.

All: MAY THEIR POWER STRENGTHEN US ALL TO WORK AGAINST RACISM, SEXISM AND UNJUST STRUCTURES.

Ninth person: I bring shortbread to our prayer basket. It brings to mind children. Let it signify little girls and boys and those focused on children. These might include: mothers and expectant mothers, teachers and midwives, those who care for children, women who nurture, and those who are role models for the next generations.

All: MAY THEY KNOW THEIR POWER AS CHURCH

CONSUMING THIS BREAD IS A SIGN OF OUR SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE FOR WHOM WE HAVE PRAYED. (Take the time to enjoy samples of the various breads. Butter and jam, and maybe cream cheese, would be nice!)



CLOSING SONG: “One Bread One Body” (or another appropriate song with the theme of *bread*) Source: OCP

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