

The bread of life

The boats from Tiberias were crowded with passengers which they were carrying back to Capernaum. Behind them was the beach where the boatmen had noticed the crowds, clamoring for a ride to the other side of the lake. Their fares exceeded what the boatmen could have made from fishing for the day, and it was an easy run because the sea was remarkably calm after the sudden storm which had raged the waters during the night.

The boat was full of talk about Jesus and the miracle of the loaves. The young boy standing by the fat helmsman boasted, "I am the one that brought the five barley loaves and the two fish."

The helmsman steered off course for a moment as he looked down at the lad. "And that was enough to feed all of these people and those still on the shore?" he laughed.

The others in the boat began to compare Jesus with Moses who had given the people bread from heaven. One man exclaimed: "Surely Jesus is a new Moses who has the power to challenge not only the kings of Israel but the power of Rome itself." Everyone agreed that Jesus was a new king, a new leader for the people.

When they reached Capernaum they were astounded to learn that Jesus was already there. He had not left with his disciples on the only boat the night before. Yet, here he was.

It was then that Jesus told the crowds that they were wrongly seeking him for earthly food. He told them he was the living bread. "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst."

The young boy who had brought the loaves and fishes the day before went straight to Jesus and stood by his side. He looked up with admiration at the tall teacher beside him. Jesus recognized the boy and smiled down, placing his hand on the boy's shoulder. Jesus hugged him to his side and repeated what he had just said: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger; and he who believes in me shall never thirst."



Today's Gospel challenges us to examine the depth of our faith. Do we come to Mass every Sunday just for our satisfaction...a "free meal" at Communion. Or are we there because of the strength of our faith. We believe.

Who are we in this crowd of Sunday followers. Are we those seeking only for today, or are we the ones who know the truth of Jesus' words: "...believe in the One God sent."

AND GOD CREATED BREAD

One eon God the Almighty said,
"I think I'll make me a loaf of bread."

Easy, you say, but here's the catch –
God wanted to make the bread from scratch.

So God sat and thought, "Now, let me see
I'll first have to make up the recipe."

But since nothing had yet begun to exist
God couldn't just write down a grocery list.

If he wanted to make everything from seed
He'd have to create all the things he'd need.

So God thought up fields of golden wheat,
Which, of course, needed soil and rain and heat,

And bees to spread pollen and worms to crawl,
And gentle winds to blow through it all.

Soon God saw he'd need an earth and a sun –
But why waste his time on making just one?

So God dreamed up a hundred trillion suns
And planets and moons by the millions.

Then God picked out one, a favorite,
And focused his almighty thoughts on it.

He'd make mountains and plains and rivers and seas,
Cows, tigers, and dogs, and chimpanzees.

By now God could see that the bread-making task
Would require some help. But who could he ask?

So God thought, "I'll make me a helper or two
Who can learn to do what they'll have to do

To move from seed, to wheat, to flour,
To dough, to bread. I'll give them that power."

So God sat back down to plan and plan.
How to begin a woman, a man?

What kind of beings should they be?
"Aha!" God said, "I will make them like me!"

"This man and woman I'm thinking of
Will know and choose and dream and love.

"They'll be the ones to understand
This universe that I have planned.

"They'll grow the wheat and make the bread
And see that every child is fed.

"And someday they will come to know
That I am the one who makes wheat grow.

"And whenever they gather my bread to share,
I'll promise them I will always be there."

Now God looked back at the plan he'd made
And thought it ready to be displayed.

From A to Z with hardly a quirk
It looked to God like the plan would work.

So out from the depths of eternity
God spoke the Word, and let it BE.

by Sr. Kieran Sawyer, SSND, 2007

