

Bread of Life - 18th Sunday in OT

Last Sunday, we began a 5 week focus on St. John's Gospel, Chapter 6 - the Bread of Life Discourse. "I am the Bread of Life," says Jesus, "whoever comes to me will never hunger." During these five Sundays we explore the dimensions of Jesus - the Bread of Life.

The Central reason why you and I are Catholics is namely the Eucharist. And the Church in her wisdom placed The Bread of Life Discourse in the center of Ordinary Time. It is a reminder of who we are and what we believe.

Jesus declares:

Amen, amen, I say to you,... Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you... This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.

Jesus is asking us to change our hearts and minds in order to see God in a new light. Instead of asking for bread for our stomachs as the ancient Israelites did when Moses led them out of Egypt. We should ask for the Bread of Life, the Bread Jesus give us, His Body and Blood.

He came seeking not only our obedience but desiring to be up close and personal with us, seeking to live within you and me.

The infinite God, who lives far above us, comes to us now inside our humanity, in our time, on our earth. This is Amazing!

A priest once asked a first communion class how does Jesus get into the Host? He was thinking he would not get an answer. But a six year old boy raised his hand and said I know - Jesus Loves Himself into the Host.

Think about it - The God who is Love - Loves Himself into the Bread and Wine so He can be intimately close to us!

I want you to recall that Jesus had previously taught His followers to pray what we now call the Lord's Prayer. The prayer in which we ask Our Father in heaven to: Give us this day our daily bread. Matt 6:11 and Luke 11:3

When we ask God to give us our daily bread, we need to pay attention to what we are praying.

The word for 'daily' [e-p -ü'-s -os] (epiousios) that Jesus uses is found nowhere else in Scripture nor anywhere else in ancient Greek literature.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: "Taken literally, Daily means (epi-ousios = "super-essential") referring directly to the Bread of Life, the Body of Christ.

So we are not praying for bread for our bodies but for the food that nourishes our hearts and souls, the Bread that strengthens our spirits, the Bread with which we nourish each other's hearts and souls with the presence of God living within us.

Food has three purposes: 1). To heal. 2). to bring people together - to unite. 3). and third, to bring joy - something we all need, but something we receive not by being pleasure seekers, but by seeking God.

Like wholesome food, Jesus heals, unites and brings joy. Jesus wants to give you and me those gifts:

Jesus was offering the crowd and to each of us Bread from Heaven, Bread that nourishes for eternal life, Bread available to people who have faith in Jesus Christ.

In Mass, once we have been nourished by the Bread from Heaven and the word of God, we are invited to carry Jesus into our homes and workplaces, radiating His love, mercy and compassion all around us.

Let us remember that the Bread of Life is Jesus Christ Himself, not merely human bread. It is Food for our souls giving us a share in God's life and assurance of eternal life with Him.

There are those who are seeking the God whose presence they have not yet experienced. Are we sharing our Daily Bread with them, the Bread of Life?

Pope Francis is telling us that we need to be better Evangelists. What he means is that we should engage people, and we should not be afraid to talk to them about God and spiritual matters.

If we do this in a loving, respectful and gentle way, we might be surprised by the positive reception we get.

At the end of today's Gospel, Jesus makes the unique and bold claim: *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."*

Let us Pray:

Give us this day, O Lord, our daily bread.

Give us your love, your life, and your Holy Spirit in this Bread from heaven that we are about to receive, in order that we may bring your loving Presence into the world around us, a world that desperately needs you.

Praise Be Jesus Christ, Now and Forever, Amen!