

Before I start today I want you to know I am going to be disobedient today and go longer than the 2 to 3 minutes we are supposed to keep our Homilies to during the Covid-19 period. But I have something to share that takes longer than that.

I'm sure that anyone here who owns a computer and has e-mail, receives on a regular basis stories and poems. Many of these end with send this to...and in x-amount of time you will receive all kinds of money or all your prayers will be answered, or even all your problems will go away. To be honest with you I do not get tied up in this current age's chain letters. I do read most of them as they come from family and friends, however they stop at my computer as I do not send them onward. Once in a great while there will be one that is worth saving, so I print it off so I can share it in my own way. Such is the case with an e-mail I received from my older sister Peggy several years ago.

As I read over today's Gospel this e-mail came to mind and I realized this was one of those moments where I could share it. Often times when we read or hear Scripture read we are asked to consider who we relate to: the crowd that Jesus is talking to, the disciples, or maybe even Jesus. However, with this particular e-mail I received we are asked to imagine ourselves as the bread. The question becomes comes what kind of bread are we?

As good Christians we know we are called to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ who today has compassion on the large crowd who have come to hear Him. It is late – they are hungry - and there are only five loaves and two fish, yet He is able to feed them all. Well my brothers and sisters we are all called to continue feeding the masses just as Jesus has taught us to do. As we do so we may remember also that the world is hungry for many things - for real bread - real food of course, but we cannot forget that people are also hungry for many other things as well. Things such as: affection, companionship, reconciliation, and forgiveness. People are hungry for affirmation and empowerment, and people are hungry for solitude and silence, and sometimes for company. They are also hungry for wisdom, and some people are starving for love. When we look at the masses in this way, then the question we should be asking ourselves is - What kind of bread am I? So let me just offer you a few suggestions so that you may understand more fully what I mean.

Are you rye bread? Rye bread has a really unique flavor, and not everyone likes it. So the rye bread person has a unique character. Maybe you are even a little quirky, which is fine but you need to know, not everyone will like that. But the

people who like rye bread really like rye bread, so the rye bread person will be just exactly what some people need in their lives. So don't be afraid to be unique - to be a rye bread kind of person.

Maybe you are sourdough bread? To make sourdough starter you have to take a bowl of simple batter and put it out on a warm windowsill and try to capture the wild yeast out of the air. Now you can't see the yeast spores - you just have to trust they are there. The sourdough person works hard to create the right kind of conditions and then waits, trusting that something good is going to happen. The sourdough person lives in patience and hope.

Now how about cinnamon swirl bread? For many cinnamon swirl toast with butter is the ultimate comfort food. You may have had the worst possible day in grade school, and when you got home your mom had a piece of cinnamon swirl toast with a glass of cold milk just waiting for you, and life was once again O.K. The cinnamon swirl bread person is the everyday comforter - the kind word across the backyard fence, the squeeze of a hand, the pat on the back. All neighborhoods need a cinnamon swirl bread person - is it you?

Now maybe you're the multigrain bread. Who here is the down-to-earth-whole-nine-grain-honey-oatmeal kind of person? The multigrain bread gives you fiber, something to chew on. The multigrain person has a lot going on inside to share, like grains gathered from a dozen different fields. And what's the point of all the fiber? Well, my brothers and sisters, to put it bluntly, there are people in this world who are spiritually---constipated. People who are so bound up inside over some issue with the Church, or Theology, or spirituality that a little multigrain wisdom might be just what they need.

Are you hungry yet? Well hang on because we have some more to go. How many of you are caramel pecan rolls. Now granted just cinnamon rolls would be more than enough but the caramel pecan roll person gives not only what you need, but also more than you ever expected – sometimes ever more than you deserve. They pour themselves out in generosity and goodness.

Now consider if you will pumpernickel bread. We can always use more pumpernickel people in the world. Pumpernickel was developed during a white flour shortage, and so the baker added whole wheat and cornmeal and rye and mashed potatoes and breadcrumbs and pretty much whatever else he could think of to make bread. So the pumpernickel person doesn't complain about what they don't have, they just make the most out of what they've been given, and come up with something

wonderful. If you don't know such a person then maybe you should consider joining; the Altar Society, the Catholic Daughters or Knights of Columbus, or you could even consider volunteering for Religious Education or RCIA or an Adult Study. I can assure you, you will quickly meet and be amazed at these pumpnickel people.

Now are you raisin bread? You know the remarkable thing about raisins is that they keep the memory of only the sweetness of the grape. They don't recall the heat of the summer sun or the cold mornings of the harvest time, and they don't remember the pruner's knife either. So the raisin bread person doesn't cling to the pain of the past, but remembers what was sweetest, and passes it on.

There is one more kind of bread we need to consider today: banana nut bread. You know that to make banana nut bread you use the bananas that have gone bad, those that too old and spotty, too bruised to be of any use, bananas that someone else might throw away. Unfortunately, our society does just that quite often with people. How easy we find it to judge people, we look at them and say "you're not good", "you're the wrong color", "you're too old or too young", and "you're too spotty and soft to be of any use". You don't belong because you are not like us. But the banana nut bread person does not think like that. Instead they go in search of the people who are bruised, the ones who seem to be going bad, the people who are a different color, are old or young, the ones who are isolated. They seek those people out and say, "We're going to make something special out of you! You belong here! You have a place and a purpose! We need you!"

Now there are thousands of other kinds of bread that you could be-garlic bread, raspberry muffins or cornbread, shortcake, Irish soda bread or even pita bread. Each of these breads has its own unique character, just like each one of us. We are all in our own way searching for that balance and proportion in our lives. Each one of us has been kneaded and punched down and shaped by the people around us. We have been tested in the fires of suffering, each one of us is unfulfilled---until we are broken and shared with others in our mission to follow Jesus Christ. Each one of us has been called to be bread for the world.

So what kind of bread are you going to be?