THE MONO COUNTY CATHOLIC

Before the mountains were born, the earth and the world brought forth, from eternity to eternity you are God.  Psalm 90:2

July 29, 2012

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?”

John 6:5

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P.O. Box 372
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
Phone: 760-934-6276

Rev. Paul Boudreau, pastor

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SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE
Mammoth Lakes: St. Joseph Church –
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 PM
Sunday Mass: 8:00 AM
La Misa en Español: 5:30 PM
Lee Vining:
Our Savior of the Mountains Mission -
Sunday Mass: 10:00 AM
Bridgeport: Infant of Prague Mission -
Sunday Mass: 12:00 Noon

CONFESSIONS
The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated at St. Joseph Church in Mammoth Lakes from 5:30 to 5:45 on Saturday afternoons, 7:30 to 7:45 on Sunday mornings, and in Spanish at 5:00 on Saturday afternoons; and upon request before mass at Our Savior of the Mountains Mission in Lee Vining and Infant of Prague Mission in Bridgeport. The “Act of Contrition” is available in the confession room.
FIRST READING: 2 Kings 4:42–44

Elisha insisted, "Give it to the people to eat. For thus says the Lord, They shall eat and there shall be some left over." And when they had eaten, there was some left over, as the Lord had said.

T
he real question for this reading is how the lector will pronounce "Baalshalishah". Or, for that matter, what will the lector do to the name Elisha? Will we ever make a phonetic distinction between Elisha and Elijah? Or will part of the post-death purgative process leading to heaven be classes conducted by the two prophets to get the names right? Imagine: "No, I didn't chop up the 450 priests of Baal; he did." Or, "I had nothing to do with sending those bears after the children. Talk to him."

All kidding aside, common to both prophets for the era in which they lived was the constant threat of drought and famine. Throw in war, pestilence, primitive agricultural science and no sophisticated distribution system and you’ve got a people who generally weren't really sure where their next meal was coming from. So the idea of “having enough” takes on a significance far beyond that which our contemporary imaginations would ascribe. For instance, religious leaders joined up with merchants, tax collectors and the like, because it sounded like a pretty good deal. So people like Peter, James and John, fishermen who couldn't catch a blessed thing, joined up with Jesus. But those for whom the world was a losing proposition, it wasn't appealing. For instance, religious leaders, merchants, tax collectors—cashing in this world for another one of non-material value didn't appeal.

In the religious culture of first century Palestine, interpretation of the ancient texts had instilled in the hearts of the people certain expectations. First, that a prophet like Moses would come to teach the people. (Deuteronomy 18:15) Further, a king like David would arise from the tribe of Judah to fulfill the promise of a Messiah, or anointed king; to free the kingdom from its enemies and restore it to its former greatness. (2 Samuel 7:5–16) Although Jesus fulfilled all of the law and the prophets, he did so according to God's plan and later religious interpretation, not according to the religious interpretation of the day.

God's plan, as Christians believe it, had always been to establish a heavenly, or “mystical” kingdom where sin and death weren't going to mess things up. Jesus came to announce that kingdom and to invite everyone to enter into it. To those for whom the world was a losing proposition, it sounded like a pretty good deal. So people like Peter, James and John, fishermen who couldn't catch a blessed thing, joined up with Jesus. But those for whom the world was a profitable enterprise—say, for instance, religious leaders, merchants, tax collectors—cashing in this world for another one of non-material value didn't appeal.

It was from those who understood Jesus as a worldly king, the fulfillment of their expectations, that he fled. The loaves and the fishes were just a sign of the kingdom he proclaimed. It wasn't meant to announce a worldly evolution. It was, rather, a revolution: A kingdom where sin and death didn't exist; where people have not just water, but every fresh thing to quench their thirst (John 4:10). That is not to say that Jesus was trying to establish a divided kingdom, but rather that we are called to distribute.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 4:1–6

I, as a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love. Living in an avaricious society, it's not hard to figure out where the conflicts and quarrels arise. Somebody wants what another has. And it’s not just about material things. What we desire can be power, influence, attention, turf—virtually anything to which we ascribe value and on which we set our hearts. Jealousy, resentment, indignation, hurt, anger, and any other troubling experience that arises in the human heart seems endemic among people who are affluent, well-fed, and have everything they need.

In order to live in the manner of the call we have received, as Paul encourages his followers in the second reading, there has to be an overriding sense that God provides literally everything that is needed. Generally speaking, if we don’t have it, then we don't need it. There's enough food, enough money, enough power, enough prestige, enough of everything to satisfy the human heart. If I don't think so, then there's something wrong with my thinking and I lack fundamental faith in the God who provides.

That being said, there are Catholic communities in places like Haiti that have major needs. There are faithful Catholics in Haiti who eat on Mondays and Thursdays, maybe, if they're lucky. This is not an exaggeration. Are there resources like food and money to meet those needs? Absolutely, but they are controlled by people like us who are not quick to let them go. God provides,