

## Craving for God

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year, B)

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Fr. Tony Davis

I remember really liking cafeteria lunches throughout my time in grade school. I can still vividly remember the feeling I would get everyday in the late morning during school as my stomach would growl and we would anticipate lunchtime. Even to this day I still crave things like the rotini and meat sauce, mashed potatoes and turkey gravy, pizza, and peanut butter bars. Whether or not the cafeteria food at St. Joseph School was objectively good or bad, I have no idea. But for me, it was wonderful. It is so good because my hunger was so intense. I craved that lunch food.

Our scripture readings this weekend connect in with that idea of craving. In our First Reading from *Exodus*, we get an example of a negative effect of craving. When Moses and Aaron were trying to help the people escape from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites found themselves stranded in the desert. The promised land was nowhere in sight. They were hungry and thirsty and tired, so they complained. “Would that we had died at the LORD's hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But you had to lead us into this desert to make the whole community die of famine!” A rumbling stomach can make us grumbling people.

In our Gospel today from *John*, Jesus calls attention to a positive effect of craving. For Jesus, hungering and thirsting is a sign of life. He uses physical hunger here as an analogy of our spiritual hunger. People who hunger for things like love, peace, the kingdom, and justice are truly alive. He says, “Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

The more we learn how to crave something in a positive sense, the more we are filled with life. To get everything we want instantaneously and not have to wait for it makes us take things for granted. When we take things for granted, we get what we want, but we will never realize how much we really wanted it. After a while, we will no longer know what we want out of life. Our desires, passions, yearnings, and longing will become dull. That is a sign of death.

Rabbi Abraham Heschel, one of the leading Jewish theologians of the 20th century, knew something about craving. He said,

“He who is satisfied has never truly craved,  
and he who craves for the light of God neglects his ease for ardor,  
his life for love,  
knowing that contentment is the shadow, not the light.”

*(I Asked for Wonder, 29-30)*

Interesting...the moments when we are most satisfied and content are the moments when we are most dead. As believers, we are to crave the light of God.

*Our craving for God is what should give us life.*

Have I become dull in my craving for God? Let us pray for a deeper hunger and thirst, that we, like the Bread of Life, may give life to the world.