

2020 August 02

Eighteenth Sunday of the Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Isaiah 55.1-3, "You that have no money, come, buy and eat" (1b)

Psalm 148, "The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food." (15)

Second: Romans 8.35, 37-39, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (35a)

Gospel: Mathew 14.13-21, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." (17)

Free Food and Drink

In Isaiah today the Lord invites the people to have free food and drink. Milk and wine are offered free. He invites to this treat those with no money; and those who have money the offer is not to spend it for that which is not food. People are told not to labour for things that do not give satisfaction. The Lord's invitation is ultimately to feed the people on the word of God. In the gospel Jesus multiplies five loaves of bread and two fish and feeds five thousand leaving a left-over of twelve baskets full!

Food and drink and milk and wine freely flowing on your table without laboring for them are truly wonderful. Those who were fed by the five loaves and fish got delighted in the free supply, which saved them from laboring for it and so next day they came in search of Jesus hoping that he would repeat the magic every day. Of course, he was and is willing to do it, not with bread that perishes, which you need to eat again and again and never being satisfied. Instead he offered them and offers us now imperishable bread that would satisfy and prepare them and us for all eternity, bread from heaven, not life sustaining but *life-giving bread!*

This everlasting food is the word of the Lord, to which the Lord invited the people through Prophet Isaiah, and which he made an everlasting covenant. In Isaiah this covenant was a promise and Jesus was the fulfillment of that promise and prophecy. Jesus came as the face of the eternal Father, who "*is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*" (Psalm 145.8) He was the Word made flesh offered to humans as food for eternity, establishing it as his New Covenant. The multiplication of the bread was just an invitation and prelude to the real bread he came to feed the people with, his own Body and Blood, true food and true drink.

St. Paul's personal attachment to Christ expressed in Romans 8.35-39 is his response to the deep understanding of this self-giving gift of Jesus to Paul, the manifestation of his (Jesus') graciousness and mercy and the overflowing of his steadfast love. This was St. Paul's personal experience with Jesus and he invites and prompts us to enter into this sweet, rich and rewarding love-relationship with Jesus, who is the face of the eternal Father to us.

Fr. George

