

## Bread for the World WEEK THREE August 22 (SPX Feast Day)

My calendar for the Fall is filling up.

And that's because of all the planning that took place this summer.

The parish staff and I mapped out our message series, our ministries and programs and events.

And in the next few weeks you'll hear about the exciting things we have planned.

I'm guessing your calendar is also taking shape, with summer ending, school beginning, and sports and activities starting up.

It can be exciting but also a little intimidating, especially if you worry about having your priorities in order.

One management guru says this:

**SCREEN: Tell me what you value and I might believe you.**

**But show me your calendar and I'll know what you really value. -Peter Drucker**

Where we put our time and energy reveals what matters most to us.

Putting it in the right place makes all the difference.

**SCREEN: Bread for the World main screen**

We are continuing our summer message series titled, Bread for the World.

Jesus told his disciples that he is the Bread of Life.

Now, that's a statement that doesn't sound very shocking to us, but it was to many of his followers.

And by telling them this, Jesus was forcing his disciples to make him their number one priority in life.

But before I talk about today's Gospel, our first reading helps set the stage.

In our Old Testament reading, Joshua was addressing the tribes of Israel.

Joshua succeeded Moses as leader of the Israelites -

he took over right before they entered the Promised Land.

Joshua led them in taking possession of the land.

But in our reading, Joshua is nearing the end of his life.

He gathered all the tribes together and asked them to recommit to the covenant,

which was the agreement God entered into with the Israelites.

The terms of the covenant were pretty basic.

The Lord said, *“I will be your God and you will be my people.”*

It was like a contract only it was binding for all time.

Here’s what Joshua said,

**SCREEN:** **If it does not please you to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will serve....**

**As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.**

Joshua was basically saying,

*“Remember all God has done for you.*

*God freed you from slavery in Egypt,*

*accompanied you in the wilderness,*

*led you into a land flowing with milk and honey,*

*will you serve this God or not?*

*Will you make God your number one priority?”*

In the Gospel reading the followers of Jesus

also found themselves at a crossroads.

They had just heard Jesus tell them that he is

the Bread of Life come down from heaven.

He even went so far as to say that his flesh is real food

and his blood is real drink and that only those

who eat and drink of him will have eternal life.

This was so shocking that some of his disciples

decided they could no longer follow him.

At which point, Jesus turned to his Twelve Apostles

and asked if they wanted to leave too.

Here’s what Peter said to Jesus:

**SCREEN:** **Master, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life.**

**We have come to believe and are convinced**

**that you are the Holy One of God.**

As I said, Jesus's words may not strike us as shocking or controversial.

Afterall, we hear them every time we attend Mass.

But every time we hear them, they also challenge us to make a choice: to follow Christ and make faith our number one priority in life or to make other things more important.

Two weeks ago, Pope Francis was speaking about just how important it is for disciples to see Jesus as the Bread of Life.

He said this:

Jesus wants to be our main course in life, not a side dish.

*Jesus wants to be our main course in life, not a side dish.*

Main course, meaning what fills us up, what nourishes and sustains us every day.

When something other than faith takes up room on a person's plate - something like a career or schooling, the pursuit of pleasure or possessions - then Christ is pushed to the side, unconsumed, ignored, discarded.

What would it mean for you to make Christ, the Bread of Life, your main course, how would you do that?

To begin, it might mean adjusting your thinking about what matters most in life.

### **SCREEN: calendar**

If you have any doubt about whether or not Christ is your number one priority, a good place to start is with your calendar.

Take a good, hard look to see what you are filling your schedule with.

Beyond work, school or sleep, how much time is taken up with hobbies, entertainment or personal pursuits?

And how much time is given to God?

If God or faith gets only an hour a week or less in your schedule, faith has not been reduced to a side dish, it's more like a crumb.

Any churchgoer who wants to make Christ, the Bread of Life, their main course has to commit to weekly worship and daily prayer.

The disciple who does this, discovers the refreshment Christ offers in worship.

Refreshment that comes from hearing God's Word,  
singing, and gathering with others.

And in the message and prayers at Mass,  
disciples discover ways to be more resilient in the face of life's challenges.  
Receiving the Body of Christ gives disciples grace for daily life.  
And daily prayer has the power to refresh, strengthen and guide.  
Without worship and prayer, disciples slowly starve, spiritually.

**SCREEN: woman drinking a glass of water**

One pastor writes this:

*sometimes it takes a drink of water to realize just how parched we've been.*

Every weekend for the past year, I've noticed the reaction of  
people returning to Mass for the first time.

I've been moved by their joy and emotion - sometimes even tears.

I witnessed the same thing when we offered drive up communion.

It's like that pastor said, it took the experience of not being able

to gather physically or receive the Bread of Life,

for some churchgoers to realize how parched, how hungry they had been.

**SCREEN: blank red background**

As I said, today we are celebrating the feast day of our parish patron saint, Pius X.

He was pope from 1903-1914.

One thing he is remembered for is

encouraging frequent reception of communion.

That can seem odd to us in 2021, but in his day,

Catholics did not regularly go to communion.

People felt unworthy of receiving the Eucharist.

Pius X encouraged Catholics to receive regularly, even saying this:

**SCREEN: Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to heaven.**

Meaning, it's the closest we can get to experiencing heaven on earth.

When we make Christ, the Bread of Life,

our number one priority, when we choose him as our main course,

he will strengthen us for daily life and remind us that our goal is eternal life.

Today, may we choose Christ again and make more room for him in our lives. Amen. +