

## 18<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Sunday

Ex 16:2-4,12-15; Eph 4:17,20-24; John 6:24-35

A friend of mine sent me a text message like this: “Three stages of human life: 1) Teenage life – you have time and energy but have no money; 2) Working life – you have money and energy but have no time; 3) Old age life – you have time and money but have no energy.”

Last Sunday’s gospel, we read about the way Jesus fed a very large crowd of people with very limited resources, only five loaves and two fish. Everyone had their needs met. After that, Jesus and His disciples crossed Lake Galilee. And today’s gospel tells us what happened after. The people followed Jesus across the lake. When they met Him, as expected, their reaction was: “Let us make Jesus our political leader so that we can eat well every day and in order for us to have a supplier of our needs.” However, Jesus tells them frankly that they did not follow Him because they believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God and they intend to grow spiritually. But because they merely want more food to eat, they want their food security be assured.



The next part of the gospel confirms this. They ask Jesus to act like Moses and to do again what Moses did to their ancestors, to give them more bread to eat. If Jesus does this, they will believe in Him. But then Jesus surprises them by saying: “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst,” (v. 35).

Actually, their request is legitimate. It is because Psychologists speak about the three levels of human nature. First, we are physical creatures with sensual gratifications, like eating, drinking, which need to be satisfied. That is why we hunger for hundreds of things; physical hunger which only food can satisfy. You cannot reason out with a hungry belly, for it has no ears.

Second, we are psychological beings, capable of using our minds, feelings and imagination. Our motivations are the need for love, self-respect, fame, esteem. That is why we hunger for feelings, we hunger for faith, we hunger for hope, we hunger for love.

But there is a third level. We are also spiritual beings having souls, hungering for beauty, truth, wisdom, and eternal fulfillment. That is why we are hunger, a deeper one, that underlies all our other hungers, and that is the hunger for the bread of eternal life, which is the hunger for God. “Don’t work for the food that perishes but work for the food of eternal life,” Christ admonishes.

Obviously, He does not mean we shouldn’t work anymore, or indulge in socials and recreation or fend for material security. What He’s saying is that we should not forget or neglect an equally important need in our life, the spiritual.

The trouble with a good number of us is that we're so preoccupied with our material needs, our pursuit for fame and more wealth that we overlook our spiritual need. But the need for God is very real. Just like what happened to Fr. Inna, a classmate and a friend of mine, when he met with an accident. The first word that came out from his mouth was not to ask his father to help him or he was thinking of the amount of money to incur when he will be hospitalized or his bank account but the word, "My Lord and my God." He was thinking of God. He desperately prayed to survive.

Jesus is the Bread of Life found in the Word of God. That is why the Bible is the greatest traveler all over the world; it penetrates every country, civilized and uncivilized in order to fill our hungry hearts.

Jesus, the Bread of Life, found in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of sacraments. Jesus decided to hide inside of bread with all his power and become the food of the souls of his followers. It is in the Eucharist does God give us as food which is a gesture of His love. Jesus Christ as our Eucharistic food nourishes and strengthens us. Not by making us less human, but by making us more courageous. Not by eliminating temptation but by making us stronger to say "No" to steal, to lie, to drink and to sin. Not by making life soft but by giving us the courage to fight hard. Not by giving us a different nature but by elevating the nature which we have.

In some Middle East countries, as one priest said, catholics, they secretly arrange "underground" Masses and receive Communion often at the risk of being caught and punished. Why do they do this? It could be due to the deprivation of the sacrament which makes it more desirable. But it cannot be denied that there is within each person a human craving for a deeper satisfaction, for a more lasting food. And this food the Lord has been giving us in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

### **Inspirational Quotes**

"Always remain close to the Catholic Church, because it alone can give you true peace, since it alone possesses Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the true Prince of Peace."---- St. Padre Pio

"If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion." St. Maximilian Kolbe

**St Augustine:** "What you see is the bread and the chalice; that is what your own eyes report to you. But what your faith obliges you to accept is that the bread is the body of Christ, and the chalice is the blood of Christ. This has been said very briefly, which may perhaps be sufficient for faith; yet faith does not desire instruction."