

Fr. Rudy's Reflections
The Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 4, 2024

"I am the Bread of Life"

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to miss the larger point because we are so focused on our immediate needs. The modern pursuit of instant gratification often blinds us to the greater purpose or true significant fact. We sometimes can't see the forest for the trees, so consumed are we with what we need at the moment. Similarly, we often pray quick prayers, focusing only on our immediate desires, forgetting that what we truly need is a feast that will fill our hearts and sustain us for a lifetime.

It is the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time and today's Gospel of John continues the Bread of Life narrative that began with last week's feeding of the 5,000. Now, we find the crowds following Jesus to Capernaum, seeking another miraculous meal. Instead, Jesus offers them something far greater: himself. He introduces himself as the Bread of Life, a source of eternal sustenance. Unlike the perishable food they sought, Jesus offers spiritual nourishment that endures forever. This quick-fix mentality was evident in the crowd after the miracle they had just witnessed—seeking him not for his teachings, but because they had been physically fed.

Jesus teaches that he will give us what we truly need. We don't have to do anything to earn his grace and mercy—just accept with an open heart. As humans, we can't truly comprehend the abundance of God's gifts. Yet, everything we have comes from him, a divine generosity that we can scarcely fathom. Pope Francis beautifully captures this truth when he says, "God became man to enter into the concrete reality of this world," to be an intimate part of our lives. Jesus doesn't remain distant, waiting to be called upon only in times of need. He desires a deep, personal intimacy with each of us, a relationship that transforms our daily existence.

The Eucharist, the bread from our Lord, sustains us on our journey to eternal life, and Jesus emphasizes this when he instructs us, "Do not work for the food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life." This divine bread nourishes both body and soul, guiding us toward spiritual liberation. He is the bread of life, the profound revelation of his divine identity and mission.

We know our journey toward a transformative spiritual life is not an easy road, and its path to healing and wholeness is often fraught with painful obstacles. Innately we know there is a profound difference between merely being hungry or thirsty, and experiencing a deep spiritual hunger and thirst. This yearning drives us toward a more profound relationship with Christ. Through Jesus our hearts are filled, and we are called to become a blessing to others as we share the spiritual nourishment we have received. In embracing Jesus as the Bread of Life, we will find complete spiritual nourishment, and in turn, this gift invites us to share our gratitude and blessings with others, so they may enjoy the transformative power of Christ.

As we partake in the Eucharist, let us remember that we are called to a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus, one that sustains us and empowers us to bring his love to the world.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy