



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Father Chris Comerford
August 5, 2018 Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

Psalm 78:3-4, 23-25, 54

Reading II Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

Gospel John 6:24-35

Homily

We know most of the Gospel readings for this year have been from the Gospel of Mark. But right now during this one segment we are going to have five Sundays from the Gospel of John. It started last week and it is all from the same chapter: John Chapter Six. It is a pretty important chapter in the Bible for us. It is good to spend some time praying and reflecting about John Chapter Six for the next month or so.

Last week Jesus was teaching in a remote place. They don't have any food and he multiplies loaves into fishes to feed five thousand, actually more than five thousand people. And there is an abundance, twelve baskets left over.

Today we continue that story. They wake up the next day and Jesus and his disciples get in their boats to go back across the Sea of Galilee and the crowds look around and say, "Where did he go?" The crowd wanted to make him an important person and Jesus knows their hearts. "You're looking for me not because you believe, but because you ate the loaves and were filled." The crowd thought it was like magic that he had given them that much food. And then he reminds and challenges them, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you." That sounds pretty good — food for eternal life.

God has given Him that authority. In the midst of this they ask Jesus this question: "What should we do to accomplish God's works?"

And Jesus answers: "Believe in the one He sent." That is the ultimate for all of us, to believe in Jesus and all that he has promised. It is a good thing to reflect upon, but they still don't quite get it. They are still saying to Jesus, "What sign can you do so we can believe in you?" They didn't see the miracle of the loaves and fishes as a great sign. They saw it as dinnertime — but it was more. They mentioned that Moses gave the people manna in the desert and Jesus reminds them, "It wasn't Moses who gave them manna, it was my Father who gave it to you."

We all know because we heard this in the first reading. They crossed the Red Sea and they are in the desert, and you know what happened? Very quickly they start

complaining. “Oh, we do not have enough to eat. If we had stayed in Egypt we would have had plenty of food.” It doesn’t take too long to start complaining about something.

Even though they had been given their freedom it wasn't enough. So God supplies. In the morning this substance that is in the dew provides a kind of food for them. They call it “manna.” You know what “manna” means? They looked at it and said, “What is it?” Or in Hebrew “man.” Which means, “What is it?” They couldn’t quite tell. It was some type of wafer with a honey taste that God had provided. In the evening God provided quail, so they had “bread” and “flesh.” But it was a test. They only had enough for the day. They were not able to save it. So, they had to trust in God. This event that happens to Moses in the desert prefigures what is going to happen to one greater than Moses — Jesus, in the Eucharist, where God will provide both bread and flesh. Remember that, we forget the flesh part so often.

But Jesus tells him that his Father gives the true bread from Heaven, the one who comes down and gives life to the world. It is more than just feeding their bodies. Then the disciples make this demand of Him: “Give us this bread always.” This is important because the bread that was given in the desert was temporary and it related to the Promised Land, but the Promised Land that was no longer there for them. But with Jesus they would have bread for always. And how does Jesus respond to their question: “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never hunger, whoever comes to me will never thirst.” What a great promise.

Hopefully it is our desire to come to Jesus, to believe in Him that we will not hunger and thirst — not physically but spiritually in our souls. Jesus wants to feed us, he wants to nourish us. This section will continue to build and we will see more of our needs and how he is going to fulfill them.

What do we take from today? Believe in the One he sent, and seek to come to Jesus as the Bread of Life. That is the great promise and hope for us. Let’s open hearts today to be fed by Jesus as the Bread of Life.

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