

The Holy Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, According to John (6:25-35)

When they found Jesus on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 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. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in the One whom God has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." ' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

The Gospel of Christ.

Reflection

I find it wonderfully affirming when I see birds taking a drink and/or having a bath in one of the many water features around our yard. I love knowing that the seeds heads from my flowers will be gone by spring – eaten throughout the fall and winter by the birds. Seeing butterflies and bees as they move from flower to flower throughout the spring and into the fall are beautiful reminders that we can nurture creation. I don't even mind when critters nibble away on my tomatoes – I trust there will be enough for our needs and, truthfully, there always seems to be enough.

The act of gardening, the work of farming, the intentional ways in which we engage with creation can provide important opportunities for us to be co-creators with God in this world. We establish patterns on which God's beloved creatures can survive and thrive as we ourselves seek to survive and thrive. There is an interconnectedness of all living things thanks to the

wisdom of God's Creation. That interconnectedness can be nourishing for us and for the world.

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How easy is it for us to become consumed by practical concerns? Yes, we need food on our tables and a roof over our head. We need to pay our bills. We need safety and security. As important as these needs are, Jesus reminds the people, and us today, that focusing too heavily on needs can become a distraction, undermining the ability to see and experience greater truths.

Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. *Jesus knows that the crowd was looking for him because he fed five thousand people in the wilderness with five loaves and two fish. Jesus provided for the needs of the crowd, and they wanted more food. They wanted more opportunities to experience the safety and security of knowing from where their next meal is coming.*

We too like safety and security. We like the reduced stress of not worrying about our next meal or the next bill. We like the idea that God rewards those who work hard, that we deserve whatever we have.

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Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life...There is a deeper truth to be learned when we move beyond focusing on our needs. In fact, God, in creation, has provided enough for the needs of everyone and everything. The challenge, the sin, is that our focus on needs can mean we tend to protect what we have for ourselves rather than trusting that there is enough.

By his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus demonstrates that there is more to life than fulfilling needs. Jesus embodied a love that is compassionate, understanding, courageous, and trusting. He knew that people would mess

up, and yet he washed feet to illustrate how we have a share with him. Jesus taught that Creation holds clues about how we can best co-exist in the Kin-dom of God. Jesus revealed that there is far more to life than we can ask or imagine if we are willing to shift our focus and trust the Creator, Redeemer, and Life-Giving Spirit.

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Jesus embodied a presence that was about more than meeting people's needs. Jesus' love is transformative, challenging us to meet people where they are at, respect the whole of creation, and trust that God's grace and gifts are enough for all! This we experience when we, through the grace of God, use our gifts as modelled by Jesus.

When we are intentional about safeguarding the integrity of creation, we are blessed by the birds, butterflies, insects, and critters who make home in these spaces. When we respect the dignity of human beings, we discover the wonder of the gifts they have to offer. When we generously share from the gifts we have been given, we continually learn there is enough. All these blessings offer meaningful nourishment that goes beyond the physical food of bread.

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What would it be like to perpetually trust the nourishment God provides in Jesus? What more can we do to believe and continually act in ways that proclaim God's gifts are always enough? How might we transform our world as we allow ourselves to be transformed by the bread of life?

*In our desire to eat this bread always, let us pray as we sing together: (VT)
789 Be a Sower*