

18th Sunday of Ordinary Time
August 1 & 2, 2015

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All Saints Parish, Syr. NY

Bread of Life

Sometime this week you will make a trip to the grocery store and get a loaf of bread, maybe several. The variety of breads available, the reasonable price, and the constancy with which it's done makes this bread buying quite uneventful.

It's difficult for us to understand the people's reactions in today's readings unless we have experienced famine or lived in a culture where only men could work for food. In either case, a simple loaf of bread is a life saving commodity.

The first reading from Exodus portrays a hungry people crying out for the bread they had in Egypt. It was the need for bread that initially brought the Israelites to Egypt. Now Moses has them out there in the desert with now food, but we know that God gives them bread to eat.

In last week's reading of the Gospel of John, we heard about Jesus' feeding of the 5,000. They had more than enough to eat, a buffet! So it's no wonder they are after Jesus to be fed again!

Our culture is all about feeding our hunger. Our media bows to the giant industries that work to have us think we can feed that hunger by buying more, having more, traveling more, experiencing more. When we are convinced we need a certain product it will be the one most known because of the millions spent on marketing. We are seduced by a culture that has grown to love distraction: face book, twitter, instagram. We are entertained by the television, video games, and computer games several hours a week.

Neil Postman, in a 1988 book called Are We Amusing Ourselves to Death? challenges us. In the forward he said that we were looking to the prophecy made in George Orwell's book 1984. In that book he made the prediction that a "Big Brother" kind of experience would pervade

our culture. This looked like an external oppressor who would ban books, deprive us of information, conceal truths, and make our culture captive. People would be controlled by what they fear.

However, in 1988, a different perspective was penned by Aldous Huxley in Brave New World. He predicted that no Big Brother would deprive us of our autonomy; it would be our love of the technology which would oppress us and undo our capacity to think. Books wouldn't be banned; no one would want to read one. Information wouldn't be withheld, rather there would be so much information we would respond in passivity and egoism. Truth would be drowned in irrelevance. We would become a trivial culture, without depth. People would be controlled by inflicting what we love by what we think we love.

We are our own worst enemy. Our market mentality and consumer culture is challenged by Jesus. Instead of loving people and using things we often use people and love things. Jesus offers us an economy of grace, filling us with inherent dignity. The bread of this world is not lasting. It will not solve our problems or the problems of the world. We must be interested in something that will help us more definitively. Jesus suggests that we take HIM. Make HIM and his way the living "bread and butter" of our daily lives.

We eat HIM literally in this Eucharistic celebration. But when we do that, we commit ourselves to take Jesus into us in every dimension. We commit to accept his lifestyle and adopt it in this world, so that no person die of hunger or loneliness, no person die because we did not take this Bread of Life seriously.

We have two more Sundays to hear about and take to heart Jesus' message of the Bread of Life.

Hudson Taylor gives hope to those who are consumed by this Bread of Life: "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply."

Amen.