

Eighteenth Sunday Ordinary Time -B - 2018
Ex.16.2-4,12-15///Eph.4.17,20-24///John 6.24-35

→one of the fastest growing industries in the country and most states these days in the gambling industry.

→almost every state including our own has casino's almost everywhere

→and one of the hallmarks of every casino (besides losing money) is the food outlets that are offered and in particular the buffet....every casino has a buffet....and if you have ever gone to a buffet...whether at a casino or to one of those restaurant style ones [buffets]...I am sure you have walked away from it thinking to yourself

“I am not going to be able to eat another bite for days...I don't think I will ever be hungry again!”

→and that is because we have a tendency to overindulge on every item that is offered at a buffet....we like to sample every menu item and [if you are like me] we usually double up on all of our favorites

→and when we are finally finished...we waddle away from the endless trough thinking of only an antacid tablet and a nap.....so uncomfortably full...wondering how we would even ever want to eat again.....

→and then what happens....just a few hours later, much to our surprise...and perhaps dismay...we feel that familiar grumbling in our stomach...that growing coaxing from our digestive track telling us it wants MORE....[like that infamous line from the movie E.T.]....“feed me”....and we wonder how can this be...how can we be hungry yet again so soon!!!!

→FOOD....it is certainly the basic ingredient for life...and eating is one of our basic pleasures as well

→from the moment we are born, we come into the world crying out to be fed...and the fixation on food doesn't end in the nursery...if anything it gets worse

→and so today....there are endless cooking outlets....magazines and books and advertisements that beg for our attention...offering us delectable recipes, new exotic appliances and clever gadgets for our kitchens....there is a food channel and a multitude of cooking shows wholly devoted to new and different recipes, competition among chefs, demonstration classes and countless ways to cook for every imaginable palate...

→not to mention the other side of all this food stuff...that being the multi-billion dollar "diet" industry as well.

→and so it goes...this endless battle we wage with our bodies; trying to maintain a healthy weight and diet, while at the same time having to also feed this ever-returning, seemingly bottomless pit of hunger...

→and sadly, there seems to be no clear cut winner in this battle given that over 60% of us are overweight in this country....and even more of us are on perpetual diets.

→unfortunately it appears as if our stomachs have a louder voice than our minds

→because often our stomachs wins the battle for our loyalty

→[as well all know] ...when we are hungry....other things happen as well...we get grumpy....we tend to lose our patience...and we have trouble focusing....

→perhaps some of you are even fighting that very battle right now (as you anticipate dinner later on tonight)....(as breakfast begins to wear thin from this morning...not to worry there are donuts and coffee after mass this morning!)...

→[so you see]..... "hunger" is a powerful force!!!!

→and our Scripture passages today...in particular today's first reading from Exodus and our Gospel selection from John....shows that our struggle with hunger is not something that is new...

---in fact...as we hear...in the days when Moses was leading the people of Israel through the wilderness toward the Promised Land, he had to deal continually with grumbling and complaints among the people

→he promised them a “land flowing with milk and honey” which sounded fine until they actually got hungry and could not find anything to eat...the promises by Moses for a full table LATER did not satisfy their hunger NOW

→Often...hunger...our hunger.....wants to be satisfied NOW!

→and in our Gospel reading today...the same thing occurs...to borrow the famous tag line from Paul Harvey...today we hear the “rest of the story”

→last week Jesus gave us page one...he fed the hungry crowd with so much food they had 12 baskets left over...people were excited to witness this miracle....to be fed by this abundance....

→today, however.... we get the “rest of the story”....the joyous crowds search for Jesus and track him down....because they were hungry again...they wanted more

→and when they meet up with Jesus...he tells them... “you don't want me...you want a miracle worker...someone to make all your hunger in life disappear

→He sees right through them.... and tells them that he is here among them not only to feed their stomachs but also to feed their souls

→...not only to give them physical nourishment but also to nourish their hearts and their minds.

→That day...as the crowd tracked down Jesus...he looked at them...in the same way he looks at us...as we too hunger.....for food to feed our bodies.....for food to feed our souls.....for food to feed our hearts

→and Jesus offers us his very presence...

→the presence and indwelling of God in our hearts

→he tells the people and he tells you and me.....“I am the bread...the food of life...whoever comes to me will never hunger...and whoever believes in me will never thirst”

PAUSE

→this is the promise given to us this day...the promise of food for the soul

---food that will never leave us hungry...no matter what life throws our way.

→[and] the Eucharist we celebrate here...and every week.....

.....is the bread of life that comes down from heaven

→this is the food that feeds our hearts, nourishes our souls and gives us the courage and strength to live and spread the gospel message.

→we hear Jesus Christ say to us each week:

“behold the Lamb of God...behold the one who takes away the sins of the world...happy are we who are called to his supper....

--it is God’s invitation for us to come to the living table of His Son...

--and we respond....

“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof...but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

→and then we come forward....just as the Israelites of long ago....and people
from every generation to receive the food that gives US everlasting life....

→in doing so...the Holy Spirit writes on our hearts and in our souls....

[gives to us....]

...the “rest of the story....”