

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – A 2020  
Isa.55.1-3///Romans 8.35,37-39///Matt.14.13-21

→the fast food industry has all of us right where they want us...our “*have it your way*” and “*guaranteed in 10 minutes*” often tempt us with food served fast...if not quick.

→with a few dollars in our pockets, or plastic in our wallets we can find food fast and consume it ever faster.

→however, one of the few positives that has come out of the recent months is a new concept or notion that is gaining momentum and acceptance among many of us...it’s called “slow food.”

→with the resurgence of home-cooked meals or being forced to eat take out at our dining room tables...eating together once again...and all the challenges we have been facing with regards to food and eating...choosing slow over fast, space over speed, measured abundance over prodigal scarcity....is quickly gaining in popularity and changing our meal habits....

→”slow food” might recapture for us....what fast food changed about eating and sharing food with one another...

→and “slow food”...is what Jesus was all about throughout his time here on earth.

→today we hear the familiar story we know as the feeding of the 5,000.

→it is the only miracle story of the Lord that appears in all four gospels.

→a close second is the story we will hear next week of Jesus walking on the water...

→however for reasons unknown, God served up the memory of this miraculous feeding in the minds of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John and obviously thousands more who were there that day on a hill somewhere in Galilee.

→for those who were fed...it was an unforgettable moment

→for us who hear about it regularly it remains utterly amazing

→and for our purposes today...it can be said that this story is about “slow food”

PAUSE

→I am not sure if you picked up on it as the gospel was read, but Jesus moves throughout this story at a much slower pace than everyone else.

→for example...at the very beginning of the reading, we learn that following the beheading of John the Baptist, Jesus “*withdrew by boat to a solitary place.*”

→the brutal, bloody death of the burly herald prophet had pummeled our Lord with near overwhelming grief.

→John was far more than a relative of Jesus...he was the one who told believer and skeptic alike that Jesus was the Promised One...God’s Messiah.

→[and] our reading today begins showing the Lord as vulnerable, hurting and sad...overcome with grief...so much so...that he retreats by boat to what was a deserted, isolated, remote place.

→there he feels this great need to slow down, rest, work through his sorrow and find some renewal.

→but things change quickly as we soon learn...the crowds arrive, circling the lake and asking for another miracle.

→gently and with gracious compassion Jesus had already “*healed their sick*” but they desired more.....

→day moves toward night with every shadow lengthening in the setting sun...

→[and] realizing that there were no towns near by...no “golden arches” on the horizon, no exit off the interstate, the disciples voice their concern in a hurried, desperate, uneasiness

*“Master, send these people away from this remote place so they can find a village nearby, grab some fast food and bed down for the night.”*

→ Jesus looks at his friends, realizing that their anxiousness was up and their patience was down and says.... *“this is not a problem....just handle it.”*

→ with disbelief, the disciples respond... *“we only have five loaves and two fish”* ---it’s the first century equivalent to “two burgers and an order of fries!”

→ and in a measured moment, Jesus slowly stares at Andrew, or maybe at Peter and says... *“bring the fish and loaves to me.”*

--and then the story slows down even more....because Jesus orders the crowd to sit down on the grass....he takes the loaves and fish, looks up to heaven, offers thanks, breaks the loaves, and gives both to the disciples who in turn pass them on to the hungry crowd.

→ what takes place is a miracle if there ever was one...and to make matters even more miraculous....when everyone had their fill, the once desperate disciples collect twelve baskets of leftovers...one for each of them

→ which brings us to ask...what might God be saying to us through this very familiar story?

→ no doubt there are many lessons to be learned...but for today...in light of what we have been living for the past months...I hear one thing perhaps worth our consideration ...and that is to slow down and to receive some **“slow food.”**

→ how often have we found ourselves sitting before a table fidgeting with our devices and remotes?

→ how often have we wiggled our toes in worn out shoes hoping we can get through this meal fast so we can be on with the rest of our day...

→and how often have we come here to church, after a frantic week...thinking about all that needs to be done and what still needs doing?

→.....all the while forgetting about God's invitation to come all who are thirsty, and hungry, worn out and downtrodden...and I will give you food...I will refresh and give you rest.

PAUSE

→the truth be told... "slow food" is the only kind that God has ever offered...

→whether it was a day's worth of manna in the wilderness, fish and bread on the hillside, bread and wine in the upper room, or bread broken by a stranger in the village of Emmaus, God has always offered us food that can only be eaten...when we are willing to receive it slow...

→an older...seasoned pastor once gave sage wisdom to an impetuous and hurried young priest who stands before you...he told me... *"the slower you go...the faster you'll get there!"* [repeat...]

*"the slower you go...the faster you'll get there!"*

→we are blessed with the opportunity to once again to gather here this day...to receive the food of life that is offered to us by our loving God.

→food that we all dearly missed over the past few months...but none the less food that gives us life, meaning and purpose.

→are you hungry these days...for comfort, peace, reassurance calmness?....

→think you can drive through God's take out window for a quick meal on the go and get all that as well?

→think again....

→come....sit down at the table, with a warm light and full menu...because  
“slow food” with all God’s blessings and presence...is what’s served **here** each week.