

(Food for thought)

Gospel - John 6: 24-35

Sign and Substance



The Gospel reading this weekend picks up the story of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes - the sign that Jesus gave, nourishing the multitude not only with his words, but with something very substantial... something they could touch, taste and assimilate. The crowd was truly hungry for Jesus' words. People had come from afar to hear him, so he rewarded them by taking away, with his words, their spiritual hunger and, with the food, the bodily hunger that they had.

In the Gospel Reading today, Jesus gives us the reason that he performed this miracle by telling us that *he is the food*, the bread that humanity needs. He offers two types of bread; the one that is life and that gives us life, and the one that sustains our physical body.

Jesus knew that they were looking for more food, that they were hungry. But The Lord is talking about another kind of hunger, the kind that affects or can affect all of us. That hunger is spiritual - the kind that no physical food can satisfy.

Dissatisfaction of spirit is often manifest in many different ways. Some people have an uneasy restlessness that seeks satisfaction for spiritual hunger in the pursuit of one thing after another. This spiritual hunger often drives people to pursue the latest electronic toy, the latest philosophy, or the latest experience. Like a universal remote control they are haphazardly flipping through the options of life but never able to settle on anything that fully satisfies their inner hunger.

One difference we can expect to see is that our hunger of spirit will be satisfied. St. Paul tells us that it is through this Bread of Life that Jesus brings about the renewal of our minds and hearts; He enables us to know him, his values, his character, his nature, his truths in an intimate way, and so "learn Christ." It is this relationship of knowing him that removes the hunger of spirit. Let's continue to pray that God will help us to do so with an active faith which enables us to constantly offer ourselves to him as a living sacrifice, and to one another as living bread.

