

(Food for thought)

Gospel - John 6: 41-51



I am the Bread of Life

Discouragement, fear, disappointment and frustration can all lead to a first response of shock and rejection. Elijah felt it - and those who first witnessed Jesus' words and works felt it. In today's Gospel reading, we can almost hear the shock and unbelief spread throughout the crowd. Looks of dismay and disappointment are interspersed by the flashing angry eyes of indignation. They grumble and complain that what they have just heard Jesus say seems to border on blasphemy. To make matters worse, Jesus expected them to take his words literally. Their grumbling was not unlike that of their ancestors in the desert when they too expressed their ingratitude by judging the ways of God's infinite Goodness.

Jesus' words were life-giving. People today continue to wander aimlessly in a way not very dissimilar to the Jews wandering in the desert, starving for lack of food and a living relationship with the Father. Even as the heavenly manna was sent to nourish the physical bodies of the ancient Israelites, so our God sent us his Son, the true heavenly food, to nourish our entire beings.

Jesus is the Living Bread of Life, all that we need to sustain our lives. He was sent from the Father to be freely received by those who believe. Like those in the Gospel reading, Jesus is telling us that we have nothing to fear - that we should not be discouraged. He is the One the world has been waiting for.

It is easy to be negative. It is also contagious. One negative thought leads to another. One negative person easily infects another.

But we have been gifted with the eternal positive. The Word of God has become one of us. He who from the beginning of time has had an intimate relationship with the Father, shares his life with us. St. Paul could have had plenty of reason to grumble. He was mocked, insulted, scourged, beaten, etc. Yet he writes to the Christians at Rome, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us."

St. Paul speaks about the necessity for a positive attitude to the Christians at Corinth: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes." For in him every one of God's promises is a "Yes." Jesus speaks about the effect of faith and trust: "He who eats my Body and drinks my Blood will have life to the full."

