

## Homily for the Eighteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Ex. 16. 3-4, 12-15 Eph. 4.17, 20-24 John 6.24-35

In today's first reading from Exodus we hear the people questioning God. The word Exodus means the "way out." The Israelites are leaving Egypt on their journey to the promised land, they are on their way out of slavery. They begin to struggle, they are hungry, and they grumble, God answers by sending them manna and quail. Manna is a Hebrew word that means "what is it." The Israelites at the time did not understand what God was feeding them. This daily bread from heaven was a sign of God's faithfulness to the covenant by which he would lead the Israelites to the Promised land. The manna is a foreshadowing of the Eucharist. Jesus points out that manna only nourished the body.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples to work for food that endures for eternal life, that the Son of Man will give you. as we heard, "For on him the Father, God, has set His seal." The word endure, is the same word for abide or remain. St. John uses this word a lot throughout his Gospel. Here, Jesus describes the food that remains in us in three ways: it is given by the Son of Man as the true bread from heaven. Given by the Father, and as his very self. We should note that this is a trinitarian text! Jesus says "God the Father has set his seal" (Jn.6. 27) on the Son of Man. We further read in Ephesians 1.13, the Holy Spirit is called the "seal."

Think of the indelible mark or character that the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders leave on the recipient. The seal of the Holy Spirit marks us for Christ, as belonging to him, being strengthened by Him, and being committed to his service. This statement then refers to the future coming of the Holy Spirit. The CCC # 698 references Jn. 6.27 and states, "The Father has set His seal" on Christ and also seals us in Him." But let's look at other "signs" and "symbols" Jesus reveals to us in this, the beginning of the "Bread of Life discourse."

The word boat is used some 47 times in the New Testament, while the word ships is used some 27 times. Jesus and the Apostles often traveled by boat. Jesus calms the seas while in a boat (Mt. 8.23-27). The purpose for the repeated use of boat is that in scripture we read that Jesus calms the storm while in the boat and He has set up the church for the same purpose. The Church is a hospital for the ill. It is a place for us to turn to not just when things are going well but when things are difficult or when we have struggles. Jesus has established the Church and the sacraments as signs to guide us and where He gives us the graces we need.

Next we note Jesus says, "Amen, amen I say to You." Whenever Jesus uses a double word; we should focus ourselves immediately to pay attention for

something very important is going to happen. The CCC states that the word Amen is a Hebrew word meaning “truly; it is so, let it be done,” signifying that an agreement has been said. This is important as Jesus says, “you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled...work for the food that endures for eternal life.” Eternal life, life in paradise, life in heaven with God! Shortly afterward, Jesus again uses the double Amen as he explains it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven, my Father gives you the true bread from heaven, For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” Jesus, in His Amen, says IT IS so, it is so much so He stakes His life on it! When we receive the precious body and blood of Christ, we too say Amen because we believe it is so. We must realize that the manna the Israelites received nourished only the body. Jesus Christ gives His very self as the Bread of Life that nourishes the soul.

When we say the Our Father, we state the petition, “give us this day our daily bread.” The word Daily; epiousios- occurs nowhere else in the Bible. The CCC #2837 states, “taken literally epi-ousios which means supernatural, refers directly to the Bread of life, the Body of Christ, the medicine of immortality, without which we have no life within us.” The CCC # 2835 also states, “there is a famine on earth, ‘not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.’ For this reason, the specifically Christian sense of this fourth petition [of the Our Father] concerns the Bread of Life: The Word of God accepted in faith, the Body of Christ received in the Eucharist.”

Today we have shared the beginning of the Bread of Life Discourse (John 6. 26 -71). Jesus builds upon the multiplication of loaves; He revealed that He is the Bread of Life who has come down from heaven to nourish us in faith, hope, and love, whereby we share more deeply in the life of Christ. For Jesus, throughout the scriptures has revealed many signs for us to see, especially the Sacraments and the Church. Let us open our eyes and our souls to the Holy Spirit and let us be messengers for Jesus Christ of all His signs. As we sit in the Church which Jesus Christ created, as we prepare to receive the Eucharist, let our Amen be an undoubted acclamation of faith, of hope, and of love as we are nourished by the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ!