

DEACON JOHN HALL'S HOMILY
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, August 1, 2021

Do you have a recipe book that looks like ours? Ours is more than thirty-six years old and has such recipes as 'Crack Dip,' 'Green Stuff,' and 'Benedictine Eggnog' from Sr. Hermana, the former and immortal principal at St. Edward School. One recipe is Mrs. Hall's Pound Cake. For many years this have been our family's funeral food. Like many of you, we all have a funeral food that you send as condolences when someone dies. Funeral food is our way of saying we don't know what to say, but we want you know that we love you and we are thinking of you.

Food . . . I believe that the number one biblical image for God's blessings is food, especially food shared with others. Here are a couple of examples from the Old Testament: Isaiah 25: "the Lord will provide a feast of juicy rich food and pure, choice wines. . ." How about Psalm 23 "Lord, [you provide] for people's work to bring forth food from the earth, wine to gladden their hearts . . . bread to sustain the human heart." Or Deuteronomy 14 " in the place which the Lord . . . chooses... you shall eat in [the] presence of the Lord . . . you shall consume it and rejoice, you and your household together."

And of course, in the New Testament Jesus ate with Martha & Mary, Matthew the tax collector . . . the wedding feast at Cana, the Great banquet parable, and of course the Last Supper.

As Fr. John mentioned in his homily last week, we have five weeks in which we hear from John's Gospel Chapter 6 - the Bread of Life discourse. We are now in week two of five. Last week we heard the Gospel of feeding of the crowd with 5 & 2 when multiplied equals 5000 . . . with a leftover of 12.

In today's Gospel, it is the same crowd of people who got their fill of bread and fish . . . that same crowd is still following or chasing Jesus. But they still don't get it. Because once they caught up with Jesus, he confronts them and said were you looking for me because I fed you. You should really seek the food of eternal life which God will give you.

And the people were like: God? The bread of life? Oh yeah, God gave our ancestors bread . . . manna in the desert. That was great! So Jesus, what can you do for us?

Imagine the feeling of despair and sadness that Jesus must have felt! These same people who just the day before were fed by Jesus . . . the same people who just 24 hours earlier witnessed how one child gave all he had for others . . . the same people who broke bread with each other . . . and all were satisfied. And now all they say is 'What are you going to do now, Jesus?'

Jesus didn't want to impress these people with miracles, he wanted them to see the greatest potential of humanity . . . is to humbly receive God's blessings . . . and gratefully share those blessings with others.

That is why you and I are here today . . . because we get Jesus' Gospel message. We aren't saying 'hey Jesus what can you do for me.' We are here to say thank you Jesus for sharing with us the bread of life - the Eucharist that we receive at this table. And we know that the word Eucharist means to give thanks. And to show we know how blessed we are, that we are grateful and thankful, and we love others, we are going to leave here and share what we have just received! Jesus, you are the bread of life.