

## REFLECTION FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

During communion, we offer *low gluten* wafers. In order to prepare enough for all who need them, may I please see a brief show of hands? Our Extraordinary Minister, Kathy, will have them at communion.

This Sunday's readings invite us to find in Jesus Christ the One who is able to quench our hunger and thirst for LIFE. He tells us: "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry, he who believes in me will never thirst.*"

Last Sunday we saw how Jesus invites us to share our daily bread with our brothers and sisters. Solidarity with our poor brothers and sisters is fundamental to following Christ. Today Jesus speaks to us of other 'hungers' that are also important in our lives: the hunger for love, for justice, for freedom, and for authentic life. In the temptations in the desert, Jesus had already replied to Satan that "man does not live by bread alone". Our possessions are important for us to live with dignity. In fact, man's first need is to have food for each day, but that alone is *not enough*.

The people whom Jesus had fed with bread, after this extraordinary event, sought him out to make him King, so that they would always have bread, but Jesus showed them that we can't just live for our daily bread, we have to find in Jesus Christ someone who can truly satisfy our "hunger" for meaning in our existence; find in him the Bread that can satisfy our hunger for the infinite, for eternity, for fullness. We must make him our fundamental food on the path to holiness, to which we are all called.

The first reading tells how God fed his people in the desert with bread from heaven, the Manna. This food enabled the people to walk through the desert to the promised land. When they meet Jesus, the people confront him with this event, but Jesus replies that he is the true Bread come down from Heaven, a bread capable of feeding us forever. For that to happen, we have to believe in him, we must live through him, and with him. We must make Jesus the light of our lives, the food of our hunger. We have to abandon the "*old self*", as St. Paul tells us in the second reading. We must give up the self-centered individual, concerned only with satisfying his carnal appetites, in order to let the "*new self*" be born in us, the man of justice and true holiness, the man who is the image and likeness of God, holy because he is holy.

So today we are invited to ask ourselves these questions:

- *How do I live my faith in Jesus Christ? Do I feed on him, on his Word, on his Bread, trying to imitate him in everything?*
- *What are the interests of my life? Do I hunger for justice, for peace, for the fullness that only Jesus Christ can give me?*
- *What things do I need to free myself from, in order to be the "new man" that Jesus Christ wants me to be?*

Amen.