

Homily of 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B (August 5, 2018)

The theme of last Sunday's reflection continues this Sunday. The Gospel of last Sunday was about the compassion of Jesus on the hungry crowd and fed them with barley loaves and fish. In the first reading of today, God had compassion on the Israelites in the desert and fed them with bread and quail (bird meat). God had compassion on the Israelites despite their insatiable, ungrateful and grumbling attitudes.

In the same way, God continues to have compassion on our world despite our sins. As the Psalmist says, "If you, Lord, keep account of sins, Lord, who can stand? But with you is forgiveness and so you are revered" (Psalm 130:3-4). "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him" (Psalm 103:12-13).

As God gave the Israelites manna and quail for their journey through the desert, Jesus gives us the word of God and the Eucharist as food for our journey of faith. We are gathered here because we believe that the human body is made of material and spiritual components. That is why the word of God says that human beings do not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God (Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4).

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenged those who were looking for him, not to look for him just for bread and fish, but to accept him as the Bread of God in order that they would be able to do the work of God. The more word of God and the Eucharist we receive the more work of God we are able to do.

From the readings we can see that no matter the amount of bread, fish and meat we have, we will never be satisfied if God is not at the center of our life. We will continue to grumble. If God is at the center of our life, we are satisfied with whatever bread, fish and meat we have. Jesus tells us, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

People who have power, wealth, money, family and friends but are far from God are spiritually starved and famished. Such condition results to futility and deceitful desires, as St. Paul warns us in the second reading. In Ephesians 2:14 St. Paul says that nothing else is our peace but Jesus Christ. Ralph Tresvant sang "Money can't buy you love; can't buy you happiness." Another singer, Christopher George Wallace sang, "It's like the more money we come across, the more problems we see." As already mentioned in this reflection, the more word of God and the Eucharist we receive the more work of God we are able to do.

Let us be grateful to God for his many blessings and minimize our grumbling. Let us also appreciate the gift of one another and minimize our grumbling, whining, nagging and complaining.

St. Paul invites each one of us to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth.

Fr. Martin Eke, MSP