

Bread of Life

Last week's stories about bread take a very different turn this week. In today's Gospel, Jesus uses the bread theme as a metaphor. Here bread symbolizes the teachings of Jesus that will nourish us, that will satisfy our deepest needs. Jesus employs a method of interpretation favored by the rabbis of his day. He refers to a passage from the religious tradition (the passage that happens to be the first reading for today), and then, step by step, explains its meaning for the people of his day. His "homily" is really a response to the challenge from those who demanded a sign that would give evidence of the authority with which he spoke.

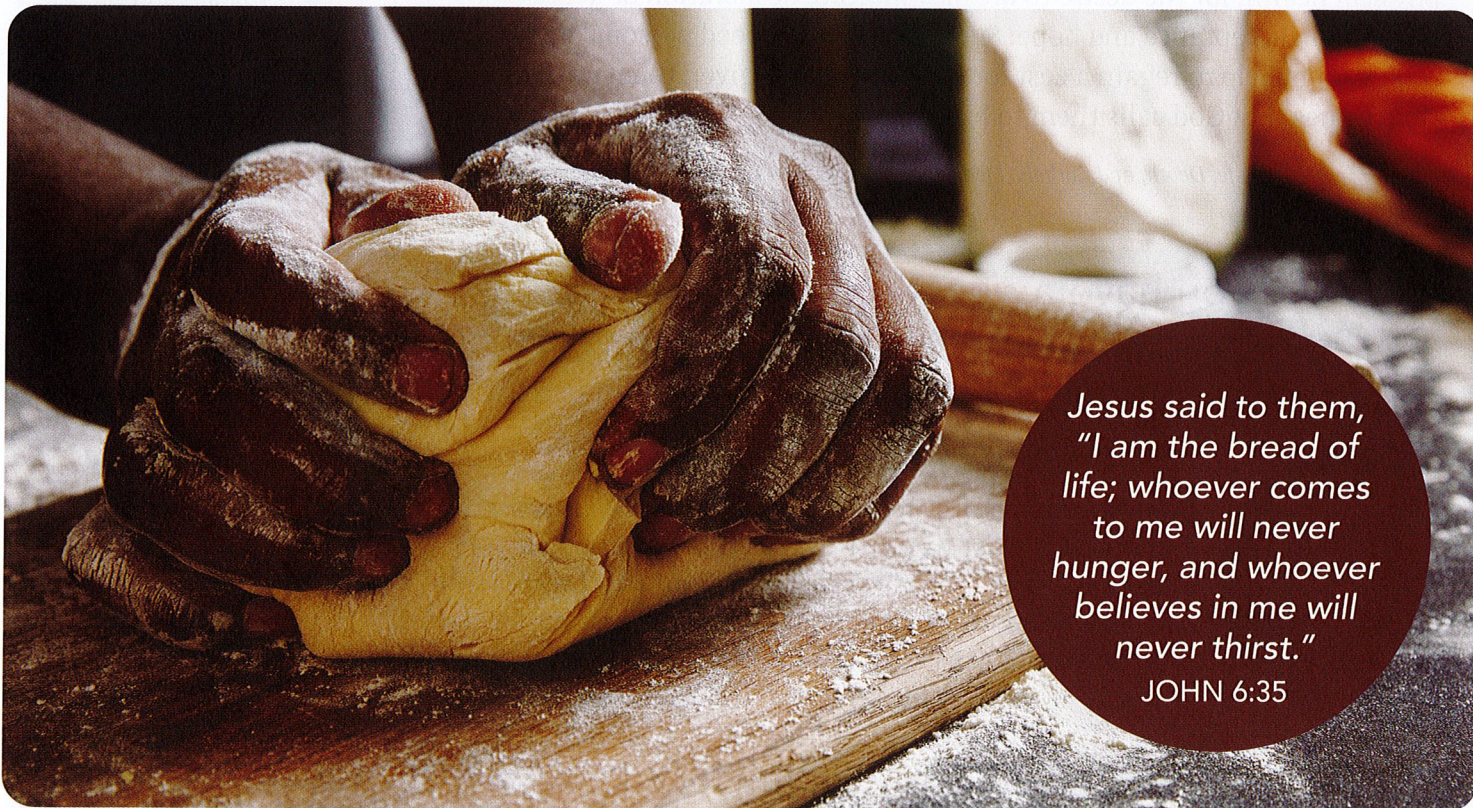
Those who challenged Jesus did so after they had been filled by the bread that he earlier miraculously provided. Jesus knew they weren't looking for signs of the presence of God in their midst. They simply wanted more food.

Jesus pointed out that the people of Moses' time had been called to trust that, day by day, God would provide them with food—as impossible as that might have seemed. Likewise, Jesus' hearers were called to trust his claims about his unique relationship with God, whom he called Father—as impossible as that might have seemed. This really isn't a story just about bread—the edible kind or the eucharistic kind. It is a story about believing in Jesus and accepting his teaching about the bread from heaven that promises eternal life.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ✧ Give thanks for God's day-by-day care for you and your loved ones.
- ✧ Pray for a deep and solid trust in God.



Jesus said to them,
"I am the bread of
life; whoever comes
to me will never
hunger, and whoever
believes in me will
never thirst."

JOHN 6:35

Dear Padre,

My elderly aunt is suffering from a terminal illness, and says she wants to die. Is this all right?

Popular psychological writings on death and dying often list the five different stages that people might go through when they are dying, namely: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. For Christians, the last stage of acceptance is saying yes to God's will. They may have been reconciled to God and others, said the things they have wanted to say, finished any unfinished business, and feel ready to leave this world and return to God.

For the dying person with faith, there may come a time when the desire to be fully united to her loving God takes priority over all other concerns and she actually desires to die. Her eyes turn toward the next life and she is not only ready to go but desires to go. This desire to leave this life is not the result of despair but rather the fruit of Christian hope.

We have a different situation when someone is not dying or is in good physical health, for the desire to die may indicate desperation or depression rather than acceptance and hope. Such persons may need personal and professional help to regain a zest for the life God has given them until the time comes that God calls them to himself.

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SHUTTERSTOCK

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to share your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Dear brothers and sisters who are ill, your sickness makes you in a particular way one of those "who labor and are burdened," and thus attract the eyes and heart of Jesus. In him, you will find light to brighten your darkest moments and hope to soothe your distress. He urges you: "Come to me."

WORLD DAY OF THE SICK, FEBRUARY 11, 2020

Calendar

Monday

AUGUST 2

Weekday

Nm 11:4b–15

Mt 14:13–21

Tuesday

AUGUST 3

Weekday

Nm 12:1–13

Mt 14:22–36 or

Mt 15:1–2, 10–14

Wednesday

AUGUST 4

St. John Vianney,

Priest

Nm 13:1–2, 25–14:1,

26–29a, 34–35

Mt 15:21–28

Thursday

AUGUST 5

Weekday

Nm 20:1–13

Mt 16:13–23

Friday

AUGUST 6

Transfiguration

of the Lord

Dn 7:9–10, 13–14

2 Pt 1:16–19

Mk 9:2–10

Saturday

AUGUST 7

Weekday

Dt 6:4–13

Mt 17:14–20

Sunday

AUGUST 8

Nineteenth Sunday in

Ordinary Time

1 Kgs 19:4–8

Eph 4:30–5:2

Jn 6:41–51