

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

GOSPEL

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When the people saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into boats and crossed to Capernaum to look for Jesus. When they found him on the other side, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered:

'I tell you most solemnly, you are not looking for me because you have seen signs but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat.

Do not work for food that cannot last, but work for food that endures to eternal life, the kind of food the Son of Man is offering you, for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal.'

Then they said to him, 'What must we do if we are to do the works that God wants?' Jesus gave them this answer, 'This is working for God: you must believe in the one he has sent.' So they said, 'What sign will you give to show us that we should believe in you? What work will you do? Our fathers had manna to eat in the desert; as Scripture says: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Jesus answered,

'I tell you most solemnly, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, it is my Father who gives you bread from heaven, the true bread, for the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'

'Sir', they said, 'give us that bread always.' Jesus answered, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; He who believes in me will never thirst.'

(John 6:24-35)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- There is no eucharistic action at the Last Supper in John's Gospel. Instead, it occurs at this point.
- The word *Rabbi* in Hebrew literally means 'my great one.' At the time of Jesus, it referred to masters or teachers who had a following of disciples who learnt from them.
- There is great debate among scholars about the meaning of the term 'Son of Man' and whether Jesus used this title of himself or whether his disciples used it of him after his death. In the Book of Daniel, it is used as a term for God's final agent of salvation at the end times.

EXPLORING THE WORD

This text comes at the beginning of a long discourse that forms the basis of the eucharistic teaching in John's Gospel. The crowd has been amply fed by the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and now they come looking for more. But Jesus is aware of their shallow motives. They seek only to fill their bellies rather than looking for the true meaning of his actions or the mystery behind the signs. The translation of this text urges the crowd to work for the food that Jesus 'is offering' in the present tense, but the Greek is actually in the future tense: 'Work for the food ... the Son of Man *will offer you.*' This points forwards to the time when Jesus will be lifted up and exalted on the cross—the pivotal moment of John's Gospel. This self-gift of the Son is the food that will endure to eternal life. The people are being directed beyond their immediate needs to something that will satisfy a much deeper and more fundamental need. Belief in Jesus will provide the nourishment for that deep need.

- What deep and fundamental needs prompted you to begin this journey you are on?
- What feeds your inner yearnings?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- What must you do 'to do the works that God wants'?
- Make time each day this week to reflect on the real nourishment you yearn for. What truly sustains your life?
- 'What sign will you give?' Have you ever required proof of something before you believed it? What are some of the 'truths' that we accept in our lives or our world that we believe but cannot prove? Share your reflections together.
- Say often this week:

Lord, let me come to you so that I will never thirst or be hungry.

