

**Homily – John 6: 41-51**  
**19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**08<sup>th</sup> August 2021, Sooeey**

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“I am the living Bread which has come down from Heaven. Anyone who eats this Bread will live forever and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world”.

The German theologian Helmut Thielicke told of a hungry man passing a store with a sign in the window, “We Sell Bread.” He entered the store, put some money on the counter, and said, “I would like to buy some bread.” The woman behind the counter replied, “We don’t sell bread.” “The sign in the window says that you do,” the hungry man said. The woman explained, “We only make **signs** here, like the one in the window that says ‘We Sell Bread.’” — But then, as Thielicke concludes, a hungry man can’t eat signs.

Well, we are living in a world where people of all races and creeds hunger more for spiritual sustenance than for physical food. In response to the spiritual hunger of people in his own day, Jesus, in today’s Gospel passage

proclaims Himself to be “*the Bread of Life that came down from Heaven.*” It is through Jesus, the Bread of Life, that we have access to the Divine life during our earthly pilgrimage to God.

The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John which contains Jesus’ teaching on the Eucharist begins with Jesus’ miraculous feeding of five thousand hungry listeners in a deserted place to satisfy their bodily hunger. And today’s Gospel describes Jesus’ discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum a day after miraculously feeding five thousand in the wilderness. During the discourse, Jesus reveals that He is the true “*Bread of Life that came down from Heaven,*” to give life to the world.

You will know the famous story of Jean Henri Fabre, the French naturalist, and his processional caterpillars. He encountered some of these interesting creatures one day while walking in the woods. They were marching in a long unbroken line front to back. What would happen if he made a complete ring with these worms? Would they break their circle or not? So, Fabre captured enough caterpillars to encircle the rim of a flowerpot. He linked them nose to posterior and started them walking in the closed circle. For days they turned like a perpetual merry-go-round. Although food was near at

hand and accessible, the caterpillars starved to death on an endless march to nowhere. That seems to be the story of many people today. They are on a march that leads to nowhere. Well dear friends, we need to stop for a moment and sit down in the presence of Jesus and receive Him as the Bread of our spiritual life in order to give the ultimate aim and direction to our life's journey.

The focus of today's Gospel is how one can meaningfully participate in the Eucharistic celebration and come to know Jesus personally. The religious people of His time totally disagreed with Jesus' claim that He had come down from heaven.

Now, how about us? Do we believe that Jesus Christ is the Bread of life: the Bread that feeds us and nourishes us spiritually? Well! Jesus says in the Gospel of John: "I am the Bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never go thirsty".

May be, we need to read John Chapter 6, in the light also of the last supper where Jesus gathered His loved ones together in the upper room at a table and He asked them to do one thing to keep His memory alive. "Take this, this bread, this is my body given for you. Take this

wine, it is my blood poured out for you". The very next day Jesus was going to die on the Cross and return to His Father in Heaven. He was leaving. He had to leave, but He wanted to stay to be present to you and to me and to the people He loves here on earth and He finds a way to do both in the food and the drink that He tells us to share. He understands that when we gather together at this table to share the Bread of life, the Bread that comes down from heaven, it is He Himself that is present in the bread and the wine; it is He Himself who is present to us in the sharing of this meal that he told us to share. He is truly present. He is really here.

If someone were to ask me to share my experience of the Lord in the Eucharist as a priest, probably I might with deep conviction say that my life would only make sense if I could break the bread of life with you and for you, for God's people; that sharing the Eucharist is the most fundamental thing in my life and God in His goodness and in His mysterious wisdom did invite me His unworthy minister to share that with you as a priest. My life does not make sense, without the presence of Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Dear friends, as we partake of this Eucharistic meal let us pray that we may recognize Him in the breaking of

the bread. And may that experience lead us closer to Jesus and to one another. God bless you all, **Amen.**