

Repetition Means Something

19th Week of Ordinary Time – John 6: 41-51

August 12, 2018

We are on the third week of a five-week discourse or homily about Jesus being the Bread of Life. The first week, Jesus feeds 5,000 people (John 6:1-15). The second week, Jesus proclaims that he is the fulfillment, the bread of life (John 6: 24-35). On this third week, Jesus indicates that this bread is no earthly form of mana, but rather, **“bread that came down from heaven.”** (John 6: 41-51)

We have two more weeks, in the sixth chapter of John’s gospel with this bread of life theme. Why? What is the gospel writer attempting to teach us? Why repeat this theme over and over and over?

Well, for one thing, it is important. The bread of life theme is extremely important to us as Catholics. Our entire worship is based on table fellowship celebrated in the context of a meal. We are all about being nourished by the bread of life.

What difference does that make? Is there really anything of substance that happens when we come to Mass and receive Jesus? Or is it just a nice, sentimental thing to do when we have time?

To practice (repetitively) the Eucharist is essential to our well-being because our current lives and our eternal lives are hinged together. This five-week discourse on Jesus, as the bread of life, has great ramifications on our eternal life. Although we don’t like to think about or talk about this truth, we humans will be dead much longer than we will ever be alive. Jesus makes this point today, **“I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die.”**

So then the question for us is what is our eternal life is worth? We might ponder this week as to whether what we do now has anything to do with our eternal reality? I think this is the point of the repetition. It means something. It means that Jesus is the one we are to depend on for our physical, temporal life, while at the same time, we are dependent on Jesus as the spiritual nourishment needed to live forever with God in heaven. Isn’t there a saying that practice (repetition) makes perfect?

Blessings!


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