

Going Deeper-18th Sunday (Year B)

Scripture

The readings this weekend are:

- + Exodus 16:2-4
- + Ephesians 4:17, 20-24
- + John 6:24-35

I am the Bread of Life

The first of the seven 'I am' statements that Jesus uses as a self-declaration, 'I am the Bread of Life' is a metaphor that shares the importance of Jesus' ability to provide for his people. 'I am' is the name of God revealed to Moses at the Burning bush in Exodus 3:14 and when Jesus uses this statement, he is expressing his divinity and that God does not and has not changed in thousands of years. He is still provider. It is interesting to note that we encounter this passage after reading how Jesus fed thousands from very little, further emphasising proof of his provision and use of this particular 'I am' statement.

One of this weekend's readings (Exodus 16:2-4) also speaks of God's physical provision, something that we see repeated throughout Scripture. However, in the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of a different kind of provision, one that does not doubt God's ability to provide for our physical needs, but addresses our spiritual needs instead. In the same way that bread, in many cultures, is a staple food in people's diet, Jesus reveals himself as that all-nourishing spiritual food. There is no need to look elsewhere for meaning in our lives-it is in Jesus.

This truth is difficult for us to live by as we see lots around us that lure us to seek fulfilment in other things. This is no different for the children we teach in our liturgy groups. The distractions of our world come in many forms and attractive packages. Perhaps adults are not as prone to fall for the latest toys and games, but we may be susceptible to other things like new technologies, accumulating possessions or the pursuit of wealth. We may not even realize what we have unintentionally allowed to 'feed' us or become central to our lives. Thankfully, we know that Jesus is always waiting for us, always desiring to be in relationship with us and once again be the centre of our lives. He is the Bread of Life that feeds the world.