

6-9-19 Jesus the Bread of Life

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Once before I mentioned about the biblical language, it is very concrete. And however, unfortunately when we start reading the theological books, somehow we start lifting ourselves away from this concreteness of the message of the Bible. So we would like to go back again to this concreteness.

In order to explain this, I would like to mention something about what happened when our colleague, our German colleague priest visited us and stayed with us for awhile. They found out Father Peter, he's the one from Germany, found out that we call [inaudible 00:00:58], we call each other honey. And so honey this and honey that, honey do. Then he wondered what are you saying father, calling your wife honey? Then he found out it is honey. Then he started laughing and laughing because nobody in Germany would call her husband or his wife honey. I learned the word [German 00:01:38] is the word, German word.

Then it dawned on me, this honey thing is a real very concrete reality of being together as husband and wife. Now, diluted, that's a strong honey. But a diluted form appears in our life like when we see ladies in advanced age in a restaurant. She comes up to you and say honey, what do you want? This is really diluted form, but very intimate. But here I'm talking about is a very strong honey and therefore when your husband or when your wife says don't call me honey, I'm not your honey anymore, and when you hear this, it's a really serious thing, yes? You know what it means. He or she doesn't mean just honey we eat. This reality of honey is there and you're going to miss it if you just keep up. So like she or he says, back off. You may not have this honey anymore.

So this sense of honey is very biblical, very concrete. Therefore when we hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ saying in the gospel according to John, it says I am the bread of life. This is not a theory. This is not a philosophy. This is our daily experience. There are seven I am sayings of Jesus in the gospel according to John. After the bread of life he says I am the light of the world and I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life, and I am the way, the truth, and the life. And finally, I am the true vine. These words of the Lord Jesus Christ we hear during this time of great feast.

Now when Christ our Lord says, I am the bread of life, let us remember this. I am is exactly the same I am Moses heard from the mouth of God when he saw God in the burning bush. And remember, Moses says what is your name? What should I tell them when I went to my people and said he said I am who I am? And as you can see, on the [Igon 00:04:49], to remind us he is the same God. And it says on, and that's Greek, the being, but it means the equivalent of I am who I am.

Now Christ our Lord took flesh and now we know who our God is. And therefore when we hear I am the bread of life means our God is the bread of life. Here the bread of life is very concrete. It's not some ideal or symbolical or allegorical. Like I said, oh, you know honey, the word honey is kind of poetic, calling your husband, calling your wife honey is really symbolical and poetic. Not at all. It is very concrete and it's not symbolical nor poetic when he or she says I am not your

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honey anymore. Don't call me honey. [inaudible 00:06:00] would say it's poetic, symbolical, not at all. She means it. He means it, and you better watch out.

So the same thing when we hear I am the bread of life, that's the first words of our Lord among the seven I am sayings. The reason why he said I am the bread of life is because this whole being a Christian is like the process of making bread and being bread and sharing bread. So we would like to review what we've been through, the great fast and the great feast. Not exactly 40 days, but we do say 40 days of great fast and 40 days of great feast, are something like making bread out of ourselves.

So fast, first period of the great fast, 40 days is like kneading. And then the next 40 days is like the feast is baking. So in order to have good bread we have to have good kneading and good baking.

Then at in the end, Pentecost. Then Pentecost is a kind of time that you set the timer when you put your bread in the oven and you know that kind of a rather interesting noise when the oven makes. Then wow, now it is done and you can open it. That's the Pentecost, next Sunday.

Now, Sundays before great Lent, you see, this is very important. If we look at the calendar every day and then oh, today is this, today is that, then oh, today's the ascension and today is Pentecost, then we'll miss out the whole scope of the great fast and great feast.

Now, before great Lent began, what are we reminded? Five items to make good bread. Do we still remember those five? They're humility, and then prayer and fasting one, and repentance and forgiveness and a loving heart. These are the five ingredients of making bread out of ourselves. These five are not treated separately, should not be treated separately. Unfortunately, people think you're like oh, we're Christians, we need prayer and fasting or humility or repentance and forgiveness or a loving heart. And we treat these all separately, just like the people in the Old Testament, or like in other religions. They all have these important aspects of our life but Christ is the one who put all these together, five ingredients, and showed us how to knead it.

Now, the first, it's almost like flower and yeast and water and salt and a loving heart. And when mother or grandmother or father or grandfather or whoever makes bread, he has to have a loving heart. I'm going to make this bread for everybody. And this is the spirit we should have. So Christ our Lord put all of these five ingredients together so that we'd become a good bread to be shared with everybody. Nobody makes bread for himself and eat. You're kind of praising yourself, oh, I made a really good loaf of bread and then enjoying it is kind of rather absurd. And whenever we make bread, we make bread to share.

In other words, when we engage in becoming all of those Christians, we are not doing it for ourselves. Our Christian life is not for ourselves, but for others. And so we started kneading. And remember, why do we have to knead the dough? Air. We want to push out of the air from the flower. And so we knead and knead. Why? Because when we bake, these airs kind of starts getting bigger and blows the bread. You know, we even say in English, he's full of air, hot air,

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wouldn't you say? Wouldn't we say oh, he's full of air? Okay, we have a lot of air in ourselves so we have to knead it.

And so we knead with prayer and fasting, humility, repentance, forgiveness and loving heart. We knead it and kneaded our bread to get rid of air. I do pottery and pottery is the same thing. If you don't get rid of the air, you knead clay and if you don't get rid of the air, what happens? In the beginning when I started, I didn't knead enough so what happened was in the oven it exploded. It explodes.

You see, this is a thing. During great Lent some of us explode, like why do we fast? Why do we, what is this humility? Well, what is repentance and forgiveness? What the heck, why do we have to go through this? It's kind of, especially if it's not kneading well and therefore we blow our top and air comes out. So we have to get rid of a lot of... And then we put it in the oven and then night of [Pasoct 00:12:40]. And we start baking, and we start smelling a really good smell of baking. So whenever we smell it, what do we say? Christ is risen. Indeed he's risen. That's the sense we receive, like when we are baking in the oven.

And there so we see seven Sundays of kneading and seven Sundays of baking and we are about to finish baking and Pentecost is next Sunday. The alarm will go off on that day. Then we will open it and see how well we are baked on that day.

Therefore now, there's one thing we have to remember. The reading today, this is the end of baking, but we read the same verses in the end of kneading. Do we remember? The same reading. The end of kneading. Now, today, is the end of baking. Today's reading was read. Do we remember? Any one of you? Holy Thursday, the very first gospel of the 12 gospels, we heard exactly the same verses of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is very important because there we see he is the bread and he shares his bread with us and we learn to share our bread with others.

Holy Thursday is the last week of the kneading, and then today is the last Sunday of kneading. We are reminded that we've received this bread. He says I am the bread of life, and that bread we receive in holy communion. And when we say holy communion, always we kind of focus on holy, the way you receive holy communion, you have to open up your mouth really big so that the priest doesn't drop any particles. In order to receive holy communion you have to do this and that.

No, these are very important things, but we should not remember that our Lord Jesus Christ told us what holy communion is in these two readings. First in holy Thursday, the first reading of the 12 gospels, and today's reading so that we will know when we receive holy communion, we are in the holy communion of the holy trinity. That's why the old [Hadox 00:16:12] church says to be baptized in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit. The reason why we insist is at the time of baptism, we are dipped in the water of holy communion of the father and the son and the holy trinity. And we start living, baking bread, making ourselves, out of ourselves a good loaf of bread so that from the time of Pentecost we begin the new year of sharing with the joy of Christ in the form of life called bread.

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Therefore we complete our kneading and baking. And next Sunday, as soon as the timer goes off, we start open the oven and start sharing this joy with the rest of the world, starting with our families and our coworkers at work or co-students or teachers. And whoever we meet, we share this bread and the content of bread is still there. Remember, humility, prayer and fasting, and forgiveness and repentance.

Did I forget one? A loving heart, that's the most important thing. Then never one of these separate, but all together. And a giving ourselves as the bread, like our Lord who said I am the bread of life. Amen.