

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 4 & 5, 2018

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There is a **Japanese folk saying**:

The scent of the flowers remains on the hands of a person who gives the gift away.
It is the way the Kingdom comes, / yielding the treasure to others, / giving away the
Pearl of Great Price, making bread and opening our arms so that others can come
and find a home secure in us.

Today we hear of God's life-saving Manna - the bread from heaven!
Paul's call to a Spiritual Revolution!
Finding within us / our **new and true self** / created in God's image ~

In the Gospel, facing the people searching for him, Jesus is **tears away** the veil of **interest**
in him and **makes them face the fact...**
they only **wanted him** to **give them** the security of food and
all that meant in the stress of the life they faced.

But **he tries to lead them to understand the meaning of food**
beyond our temporary and physical needs..
food that endures to eternal life.

By their faces, he knew he had lost them!

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As they scramble to understand, they question:
"What **do we need to do** to perform these works of God?"

Then Jesus REALLY threw them off:
"**This is the work of God** - you must believe in the One sent by God!"

Wait a minute... you **want us** to believe **you were sent by God?**
What **sign** can you give us? Our **ancestors had Manna** fall from the heavens!
What is your sign?

Picture Jesus: slightly shaking his head and saying...
"**It wasn't Moses** giving you Manna - It was **God who gave you Manna...**"

Now- Jesus goes on to confuse them more

...
"The **Bread of God is the One sent** from heaven and **gives life to the world.**"

Think about their reaction... "Oh then, give us this bread **Now!**"

Picture Jesus looking carefully over the people - saying in the silence...

I AM the Bread of Life!

No one who comes to me will **ever be hungry** - or **thirsty!**"

We stop here - seeing them looking at Jesus - were they silent?

Did some turn away and leave?

Did some feel - "**there's more to what He is saying**"... What is it?
and stay - wanting to understand more - and with **their physical hunger forgotten...**

So let us take a minute to think about "**food**" in a new way... a different kind of nourishment.

Remember the gospel for the 4th Sunday in Lent?

Jesus had been talking with the **Samaritan woman at the well** when the disciples came back
with lunch and were **startled** to seeing him conversing with a foreign woman!!

As she leaves, they don't have the courage to ask about that / but instead offer Jesus the food
they brought with them... His answer - maybe following the woman with his eyes...

*"I have food to eat that you do not know about...
My food is to do the will of the One who sent me."*

The big question is: "What is **that "Will"?** It is to *unite all people in Love!*

Uniting people - helping someone - fixing a problem - sharing...

Think of **an experience** you had when you helped someone and made their day...
remember how that felt...?

THAT is the **food** to **Eternal Life.**

Being **active in the cause of peace, unity and justice** ~ is what this parish is all about...

Fr. Fred is always counseling us that we need to balance silence and prayer with action..

These 2 parts are essential together!

Now I would like to **suggest a companion part to the prayer**
that I find **completes that first step.**

Let me start with a story - true and maybe you have heard it... but let's **dig deeper into it.**

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A cab driver got a call near the end of his night shift to pick up a passenger. As he pulled up
to the house, he honked... and then honked again. Since this was his last call, he was tempted
to pull away, but instead got out and walked to the porch and knocked on the door.

"Just a minute", answered a frail voice...and he could hear something being dragged across the floor. After a long pause, the door opened to reveal a small lady in her 90's, wearing a print dress and pillbox hat with a veil, like somebody out of the 40's. She had a small nylon suitcase and as the driver looked inside... there was nothing on the walls, the furniture covered with sheets and some boxes...

"Would you carry my bag out to the car? she asked. He did and came back to help her. She took his arm and they walked slowly to the car. She kept thanking him for his kindness.

"It's nothing," he said - "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated."

"Oh, you're such a good boy," she responded and as she gave him the address, she asked if they could drive through downtown... "It's not the shortest way," he answered...

"Oh, I don't mind," she said. I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice."

The cab driver watched her in the rear-view mirror... He saw her eyes glistening..

"I don't have any family left", she continued in a soft voice.

"The doctor says I don't have very long."

The cab driver **quietly reached over and shut off the meter.**

"What route would you like me to take," he asked...

For the next 2 hours, they drove through the city... she showed him the **building where she had worked as an elevator operator...**

They drove **through the neighborhood** where she and her husband **lived as newlyweds.**

She had him pull up to a **furniture warehouse** that had once been a **ballroom** where she **had gone dancing as a girl...**

Sometimes she **asked him to slow in front of a particular building or corner** and she would **sit there staring into the darkness, saying nothing.**

Then she suddenly said, "**I'm tired. Let's go now.**"

They drove in silence to the address, a low building, like a small convalescent home with a driveway that passed under a portico...

Two orderlies came out as soon as he stopped, solicitous and intent, watching her every move. Of course, they had been expecting her.

The driver took her suitcase from the trunk and brought it to her - already in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse...

"Nothing," he said...

"You have to make a living," she answered...

"There are other passengers" he responded.

He reached down and put his arms around her and she held him tightly...

"You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said..."Thank you!"

He squeezed her hand, unable to speak - they both had glistening eyes...

They wheeled her into the building as he watched... turned and walked back to the cab.

For the **rest of the day, he could hardly talk...** what if he hadn't waited for her and left.

what if a driver had been impatient with her...

As he reflected - **he realized that he had not done anything more important in his life.**

He had had a Spiritual Revolution!

He went from being immersed in his life / to becoming fully aware of another's life.

He realized she was **enfolding all the moments** of her life -
looking at the places that were cornerstones in her **stages of life.**

By reviewing them - in this ride - she was **drawing them into her heart** where she could
hold together all those moments and cherished loved ones in gratitude
as she reached the end of her time...

That was **enormously important** as it became her deeper awareness of blessings
in her final days.

As the driver thought back over that ride - he realized - **she had said little on the surface** - but
her glistening eyes told the depth... and **his heart responded to her - at the same depth.**

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That is the **CORE of the Spiritual Revolution..** and the **first part of that process from**
which our action flows. Without that - we will burn out in our activity.

When we **look into the actual being of another - whole-heartedly - beyond ourselves...**
we enter into the reality of God....

As we selflessly see in that other - into **their hearts and lives....**
we **begin to grasp in that life** - what **God sees and knows** -
God and that person become united IN you!

That union - that understanding is timeless - beyond words... but it changes everything!

This is performing the Works of God - this is the food of eternal life!

But it comes from our Faith in God - as Jesus displayed it to us.

That is the **WHY of the Incarnation** - to reveal the deep love desire God has FOR US to know God's love and union of others ~ within us.

You may say - well this is for mystics or people with deeper faith than I have...

No! this is for everyone - children get it easily...

A Mom turned to look for her 4 year old and found him sitting on the porch steps with an older man next door who had just buried his wife.
Oh, he shouldn't be bothering him at this time, she thought.

When he came home, she started to tell him that it was a hard time for their neighbor but her son just said: "I know, Mommy, I was helping him cry."

The Spiritual Revolution involves our awakening to the real and intangible moments
- in our lives and in others...
moments when ~ we just Stop... become aware... and listen.

From that stance - we do the works of God

From that stance - We become Manna in the lives of others.

When that happens,
Stop and smell the scent of the flowers that remain on your hands...
Your gift allowed others to find a home secure in you!