

Aug. 1, 2021 John 6: 24-35. Ex. 16:2-4, 12-15

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### ENTERING THE SCENE:

Fr. Beck asks: "What is it we hunger for? Many things. To be treated with dignity, to be recognized for our worth. For a place in the world. For a society that gives each his or her due.....It is seen in the society around us, where seekers are everywhere, and the longing for spiritual substance is almost tangible, all the more for the frustration of not finding it where it is expected to be." These words ring with a special urgency these days as we attempt to live into the challenges in a world of chaos and complexity. We like the people in this text think we knew what God wanted and how it should always be so. We join them now in pleading for a sign that we are on the right track. We come again to the table of the bread of life in order to never be hungry again.

### John 6: 24-35

24 Once the crowd **realized** that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in **search** of Jesus. 25 When they **found** him on the **other side** of the lake, they asked him, "**Rabbi**, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are **looking** for me, not because you saw **miraculous signs** but because you ate the loaves and **had your fill**. 27 Do not work for food that **spoils**, but for food that **endures to eternal life**, which the Son of Man will **give** you. On him God the Father has placed his **seal of approval**." 28 Then they asked him, "What must we do to **do the works** God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The **work of God** is this: to **believe** in the one he has sent." 30 So they asked him, "What **miraculous sign** then will you give that we may **see** it and **believe** you? What will you do? 31 Our **forefathers** ate the **manna** in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them **bread from heaven** to eat.' "32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not **Moses** who has given you the **bread from heaven**, but it is my Father who gives you the true **bread from heaven**. 33 For the **bread of God** is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 Sir," they said, "from now on **give** us this bread." 35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the **bread of life**. He who comes to me will never go **hungry**, and he who **believes** in me will never be **thirsty**."

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Something spoils when it isn't used in a timely manner. Is there anything that you worked for that spoiled this past week?

**PRAYER:** Jesus, I come to the altar each time looking to be fed with the 'bread of life' you promised. Too often I come distracted by the many things in my life that spoil my awareness of this great gift you are offering me. Help me to grow in my ability to fully appreciate the miraculous food that you give so freely. Amen.

## WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

**REALIZED / BELIEVE / SEE:** First comes the realization that comes from seeing, and then hopefully, comes believing. The people realized that Jesus was special, but not in the way that could lead them to belief because they were looking back instead of ahead. *How does Jesus try to move the people to a deeper understanding of what was taking place?*

**SEARCH / LOOKING / FOUND:** The people thought that they had found the new Moses who would lead them to the source of unending nourishment.

*How does Jesus confront them with their inadequate understanding? Have you ever been confronted in a similar way? Did it help move you to a deeper level of understanding?*

**OTHER SIDE:** The author of this gospel literally moves the scene to the “other side” of the lake in order to shift the emphasis from perishable nourishment to the un-perishable Word of God.

*What helps you go to the “other side” beyond miraculous signs to the “work of God”?*

**RABBI / SEAL OF APPROVAL:** The Rabbi was the recognized teacher of the things of God in Jesus’ day. What they taught was believed to have God’s “seal of approval”.

*What is John doing by having the people call Jesus Rabbi? Who serves this role for you today?*



**MIRACULOUS SIGNS:** Ever since Abraham, and especially with Moses, miraculous signs served to affirm that God was “on our side”.

*Is this still believed today? What is the pitfall of this form of belief?*

**HAD YOUR FILL / HUNGRY / THIRSTY:** All living things need food and drink to survive. Those that have an adequate source of both, thrive to pass on life to the next generation.

*What are you hungry and thirsty for? What has the ability to fill you? How does a belief in eternal life impact your quest for nourishment?*

**SPOILS/ ENDURES / ETERNAL LIFE:** All that is limited by space and time has the potential to spoil. Jesus shows we can transform that which can spoil to that which endures into eternity.

*How does receiving “the bread of life” enable you to endure into eternity?*

**DO THE WORKS / WORK OF GOD:** Ever since “Eden”, humanity has needed to work for their “daily bread”. Miraculous events were perceived as the “work of God”.

*How do these two understandings of “works” challenge each other?*

**GIVE:** The people respond by eagerly asking for God’s gift in the only way they have ever experienced. Jesus introduces them to another way of experiencing God’s gift.

*How does scripture study help you to go beyond the limited meaning of words to the unlimited meaning?*

**FOREFATHERS / MOSES:** Up until Jesus, the people always looked in “their rear view mirrors” in order to see God. Jesus now insists that they look at what is right before them in order to see where to go.

*What is right before your eyes now, which helps you to see where to go in your faith life for the future?*

**MANNA / BREAD FROM HEAVEN / BREAD OF GOD / BREAD OF LIFE:** John’s gospel begins with, “In the beginning was the Word”.

*How is Jesus “manna” for you? When you receive the bread from heaven/of God for life, are you able to come to belief and endure?*

**PARALLEL TEXTS:** Jn. 6: 35//EX. 3:14; Jn. 11:3; Jn. 6:20; JN. 8: 58;

**OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK:** Ex. 16: 2-4, 12-15, Ps. 78: 3-4, 23-24,34, Eph. 4: 17, 20-24, Jn. 6: 24-35

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

The Eucharist is telling us that God is the food and all we have to do is provide the hunger. Somehow we have to make sure that each day we are hungry, that there’s room inside of us for another presence. If you are filled with your own opinions, ideas, righteousness, superiority, or sufficiency, you are a world unto yourself and there is no room for “another.” Despite all our attempts to define who is worthy and who is not worthy to receive communion, our only ticket or prerequisite for coming to Eucharist is hunger. And most often sinners are much more hungry than the “saints.” Richard Rohr

The hiding place of God, the revelation place of God, is the material world. You don’t have to put spirit and matter together; they have been together ever since the Big Bang, 14.6 billion years ago (see [Genesis 1:1-2](#) and [John 1:1-5](#)). You have to get on your knees and recognize this momentous truth as already and always so. The Eucharist offers microcosmic moments of belief, and love of what is cosmically true. It will surely take a lifetime of kneeling and surrendering, trusting and letting go, believing and saying, “How could this be true?” Gandhi also said, “If I really believed what you believe, I wouldn’t get up from my knees.” The only trouble is that many fervent Christians kneel before the Eucharistic Body of Christ but not the Human Body of Christ that Paul brilliantly describes

(1 Corinthians 12:12-26). Remember, it is much easier for God to transform bread than to transform people, and the bread is for the sake of the people. Richard Rohr

Gandhi said, “There are so many hungry people in the world that God could only come into the world in the form of food.

”In Christian spirituality, Eucharist is about soul/body growth from ego-centrism into altruism, into Godlikeness. \_Pg.. 23. Steffen, Sylvester L. [The Possible Journey](#). Bloomington, IN. AuthorHouse. 2006.

The Eucharist is the fulfillment and enjoyment of our baptismal incorporation, and in this sense it is a movement from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, reaching us in order to be returned by us in the same way to the Father.

Zizioulas, John D. [Communion and Otherness](#). NY. T & T Clark. 2006. Pg. 148.

I am your food, but instead of my being changed into you, it is you who will be transformed into me. St. Augustine

The table represents the unknown yearning of every human heart for communion with the “something more” that infuses all that exists. Pg. 110 Homan, Daniel, OSB & Pratt, Lonni Collins. [Radical Hospitality](#). Brewster, MA. Paraclete Press. 2002.

Go out from yourself with all that one is, which is nothing, and pour out that nothingness in gratitude that God is who He is. Thomas Merton. *Dancing in the Water of Life*. Journals, Volume 5. Rebert E. Daggy, editor. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997: 178

The miraculous is not extraordinary but the common mode of existence. It is our daily bread. Whoever really has considered the lilies of the field or the birds of the air and pondered the improbability of their existence in this warm world within the cold and empty stellar distances will hardly balk at the turning of water into wine - which was, after all, a very small miracle. We forget the greater and still continuing miracle by which water (with soil and sunlight) is turned into grapes. Wendell Berry

Thus in John there are not only “I am sayings that stand alone, but there are also those with predicates like “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” or “I am the bread of life” or “I am the resurrection and the life.” We look up from the one to the other, from the impersonal to the personal God, from life and light and love we are seeking to One in whom we find it..

Dunne, John. [The Homing Spirit](#). NY. Crossroad Pub. 1987. Page100-101

If presence of mind is in being present to oneself, it can deepen nevertheless into being. In the presence of God, and in that a presence what I am calling “heart’s desire” can be discerned as lasting desire hidden in every passing desire, as longing “for the food which perishes.” That deepening takes place as one’s day-to-day conversation with oneself turn into a conversation with God, as soliloquy gives way to prayer. Dunne, John. [The Homing Spirit](#). NY. Crossroad Pub. 1987. Page 22.



CAPERNAUM is on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. During the early Roman period it was an important border village between Galilee and the Golan, and Jesus probably lived there during some part of his Galilean ministry. The Gospels report that Jesus had a close relationship with four prominent, wealthy families from the upper part of the city. Archaeological explorations have been working on this site since 1978, and this fall their focus will be on first century ruins along the shoreline. They will expand the excavation of the roman bath and the villa adjacent to it.

[Biblical Archaeology Review](#). Jan/Feb. 2003. Pg. 50-51.

Real food, for the body as well as for the mind and spirit, will be shared with the world whenever with any authenticity Eucharistic food is shared in the church. As Christ himself fed the hungry and ate meals with sinners, told stories of banquets for the flotsam and jetsam on the edges of society, he fulfilled the promise in his mother’s song of a new order where the hungry would be fed and the rich emptied of their affluence Lk.1:46ff. So it is that amid the wilderness of our own decaying order, from wretched urban ghettos to Africa’s parched and famished, war-torn deserts and the raped and starving victims of “ethnic cleansing” in “civilized”

European cities, the Last Supper continues visibly to proclaim a future of freedom, peace, and plenty in a fellowship of divine and human unity, and commits the priestly church to penultimate realizations of that future within the present world. Lewis, Alan E. [Between Cross and Resurrection](#). Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans. 2001. Pgs. 397-8.

Now, in our image of humanity as a Holy Communion, Jesus also figures as the person who does actually love individual persons in this energy-activating way and who starts the chain reaction of persons loving one another. Because of his humanity, Jesus is familiar and tangible to us. Because of his escape from death, he is secure; his love can never fail, and he is able, across time, to be actually-not just imaginatively-present to us now. Because of his abundant free energy, he can liberate love in all who are willing to be loved by him. Pg. 13.

Bruteau, Beatrice. *The Grand Option: Personal Transformation and New Creation*. Univ. of Notre Dame Press. IN. Notre Dame. 2001.

The unity attained by communion arises from the very interiority of the beings united. From their presence in the midst of each other, and it may be freely accepted. Pg. 154-5.

Bruteau, Beatrice. [The Grand Option](#). Personal Transformation and a New Creation. South Bend, IN: Univ. of Note Dame Press, 2001.

"Not long ago I took my older daughter to a talk given by a nutritionist, sponsored by the local girls' running group. She said something that has stuck with me as I've been planning our meals: if you don't get the food your body needs, you'll crave the wrong things like sugar and salt and fat. Eat right, she said, and the cravings will disappear.... In light of all this, I have approached the Solemnity of Corpus Christi with new eyes. The Eucharist is our food for eternal life. I think of this not as something out there in the distant future, but rather as a way of living in the here and now. Lacking this food, our spirit reaches out for wrong cravings: power and wealth and honors and all the rest. With this food, we become more and more capable of living eternal life. We become what we eat, though in the way opposite to eating. Instead of the food becoming part of us, we become part of the Body of Christ. We become what we eat." -- Tim Muldoon

If you receive this well, you are what you receive...for the loaf that contains Christ is made up of many individual kernels of grain, but these kernels must, to become the loaf containing Christ, first be ground up and then baked together by fire.'

St Augustine (*Sermo 227, In Die Paschae IV*) 75-6

Who you are in God is who you are! In fact, that's all you are. Everything else is passing away. The Eucharist becomes our ongoing touchstone through the Christian journey, a place we must keep going to in order to find our face, our name, our absolute identity, who we are in Christ, and thus who we are forever. Richard Rohr

The problem with so many churches in our country is that every worship service tries to produce step one of Christian existence. And that's why we don't get any mature, grown-up Christians, but often very childish Christians who are busy with their own feelings and nothing else. Pg. 145 Nepo, Mark. [The Book of Awakening](#). Berkeley, CA. Conari Press. 2000.

Jesus says, "If you eat this bread you will live forever" ([John 6:51](#)). It is so interesting that he chooses taste, flavor, and nutrition as the symbol of how life is transferred, and not intellectual cognition. If you live by the momentary identity that others give you, that's what dies when you die, and you're left with nothing. Your relative identity passes away, but it is like the painful erasing of an unwanted tattoo. When Jesus says he's giving himself to you as the "bread of life," he's saying, as it were, "Find yourself in me, and this will not pass or change or die. Eat this food as your primary nutrition, and you are indestructible." This is your absolute and indestructible identity. Richard Rohr

#### SUGGESTED READING:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: [www.theark1.com](http://www.theark1.com)

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2009. Pgs 133-136. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](#)

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2012. Pgs. 105-107. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](#)

White, William R [Stories for the Gathering](#). Minneapolis, MN. Augsburg Pub. House. 1997. THE LOTTERY: Pgs. 71ff.

"EVERYTHING THAT THE FATHER GIVES ME WILL COME TO ME;

I have feelings which go this way and that, / In me there are streaks of this and that,

For / Many parts go into the making of each of us.

Some people know this facet of me / And others, that...but

Only ONE knows ALL of me / And in knowing, loves.

Halpin, Marlene, Dominican. [Leading Prayer: Plain and Simple](#). Dubuque, IA. Brown Pub. 1990. I WILL NOT REJECT ANYONE WHO COMES TO ME." . Page 96

"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE...

Bread / Made only to be broken, received, eaten; / Made to be destroyed to continue life.

Bread wanted by all: day by day by day. / Whose hunger do I satisfy? / Who satisfies mine?

Halpin, Marlene, Dominican. [Leading Prayer: Plain and Simple](#). Dubuque, IA. Brown Pub. 1990. Page 35. NO ONE COMING TO ME WILL EVER BE HUNGRY AGAIN."