

Homily Eighteenth Sunday Aug 2 2015

“THIS IS THE BREAD THAT THE LORD HAS GIVEN YOU” ...THE WORDS OF MOSES
IN OUR FIRST READING.

**“MY FATHER GIVES YOU THE TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN. FOR THE BREAD OF
GOD IS THAT WHICH COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND GIVES LIFE TO THE
WORLD”** FROM TODAY’S GOSPEL OF JOHN

AND FINALLY; **“PUT AWAY THE OLD SELF OF YOUR FORMER WAY OF
LIFE.....PUT ON THE NEW SELF, CREATED IN GOD’S WAY, IN RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND HOLINESS OF TRUTH.**

PAUL’S WORDS TO THE EPHESIANS IN OUR SECOND READING.

I RECAP ALL THESE, TO HIGHLIGHT THE THEME FOR TODAY;

THE BREAD OF LIFE.....OUR PATH TO EVERLASTING LIFE....BUT ALSO THE PATH TO
A NEW SELF HERE ON EARTH....THAT NEW SELF WE ALL WANT TO BE.

THE READING FROM EXODUS SETS THE STAGE FOR IT.... AS MOSES EXPLAINS TO
THE GRUMBLING ISREALITES ABOUT THE BREAD...SENT BY GOD FOR FOOD.

THEN JOHN TELLS US.....THAT GOD.....THE FATHER....GIVES US THE TRUE BREAD
.....IN JESUS.....WHO CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN...TO GIVE LIFE TO THE WORLD.

(2)

IN THIS “BREAD OF LIFE DISCOURSE” AS IT’S CALLED....JOHN GIVES US THE TRUE MEANING...THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LAST SUPPER...WHEN JESUS INSTITUTED THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.... THE TRUE BREAD.....HIS BODY AND BLOOD.....

WE’LL HEAR IT IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS WHEN FATHER KEITH ELEVATES THE CONCECRATED EUCHARIST AND SAYS.....

“TAKE THIS ALL OF YOU AND EAT IT.....THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU”..... CHRIST’S OWN WORDS, SPOKEN TO HIS DISCIPLES BEFORE HIS PASSION AND DEATH

WE ALL KNOW THESE WORDS....AND IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN, A CATHOLIC....YOU HAVE LEARNED EXACTLY WHAT THEY MEAN.....WE MAY NOT DWELL ON IT EVERY TIME WE HEAR THEM..... BUT AS CHRISTIANS AND CATHOLICS WE BELIEVE CHRIST GAVE HIS LIFE ON THE CROSS FOR US.

.....WHICH LEADS ME TO A STORY.....

A STORY ABOUT A SOMEONE WHO DID BELIEVE IN GOD....BELIEVED IN JESUS CHRIST..... THIS PERSON WAS RAISED IN A CHRISTIAN HOME.....AND FOR THE MOST PART LIVED A CHRISTIAN LIFE.....AND ALTHOUGH NOT CATHOLIC, THEY MARRY A GOOD CATHOLICHAD CHILDREN AND BEGAN A SUCCESSFUL CAREER. THIS PERSON WAS A GOOD SPOUSE....A GOOD PARENT.....RESPECTED IN BUSINESS AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

(3)

BUT.....SOMETHING WAS MISSING IN THEIR LIFE..... ALTHOUGH THEY ATTENDED MASS WEEKLY.....THEY WERE JUST GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS....FOR DURING THE WEEK THEIR PRIMARY FOCUS IN LIFE WAS; “WHAT’S BEST FOR ME” ...WHAT WILL ENRICH ME.....GET ME MORE OF WHAT I WANT...AT HOME, AT WORK....IN LIFE. BASICALLY, THEIR PRIORITIES WERE BEING SET BY “THE WORLD”NOT BY JESUS....NOT BY GOD. AND WHILE THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH STRIVING FOR SUCCESS.....IF WE ALWAYS LIVE BY THE WORLDS STANDARDS.....PUTTING OURSELVES FIRST IN ALL THINGS.....THERE IS SOMETHING MISSING.....IT’S GOD THAT’S MISSING..... BUT ISN’T THIS PRECISELY WHAT OUR MESSAGE TODAY ADDRESSES.....THE TRUE SOURCE OF EVERYTHING GOOD.....THE TRUE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS....DOES NOT COME FROM THE WORLD.....THE TRUE SOURCE OF ALL GOOD COMES FROM GOD....MOSES TRIED TO EXPLAIN THIS TO THE ISRAELITES WHEN GOD SENT“MANA” FROM HEAVEN.....**AND JOHN SAYS** IN HIS GOSPEL.....JESUS IS THE ONE....THE TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN THAT GIVES LIFE TO THE WORLD.....NOT BREAD THAT PERISHES....NOT THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD..... BUT THE BREAD THAT LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE.....”**WHICH THE SON OF MAN WILL GIVE YOU,**” THE SCRIPTURE SAYS.....THE FACT IS..... THE WORLD....THE DEVIL.... LIFE.....USES OUR OWN HUMAN NATURE AGAINST US..... CONVINCES US THAT THE MATERIAL THINGS OF THIS WORLD ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE....MORE IMPORTANT EVEN..... THAN GOD.....

(4)

AND....HERE IS AN IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER.....THIS CAN HAPPEN TO ANY OF US....WITHOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.....AND THIS IS PRECISELY WHY WE COME TO MASS.....THAT'S WHY WE GATHER.... TO CELEBRATE OUR COMMON BELIEFS.....THAT'S WHY WE HAVE "THE CHURCH" TO BE REMINDED..... AND..... TO REMIND EACH OTHER THAT THE TRUE SECRETS OF LIFE....THE TRUE RICHES IN LIFE.....TRUE PEACE AND HAPPINESS.... COME FROM GOD.

THIS PERSON IN OUR STORY.....KNEW SOMETHING WAS MISSING.....THEY WERE COMING TO MASS.....BUT NOT A PART OF THE MASS.....THEY WERE SAYING THE WORDS TO THE PRAYERS....BUT NOT PRAYING....SAYING THE CREED BUT NOT BELIEVING....THEY WERE JUST GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS!!!!

THIS PERSON HAD BEEN ASKED AND INVITED NUMEROUS TIMES BY THEIR SPOUSE AND OTHERS TO ATTEND "RCIA"; "THE RIGHT OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS"BUT HAD POLITELY DECLINED....THEY DIDN'T NEED TO COME.....THEY WERE BAPTISED....THEY WERE CHRISTIAN...THEY BELIEVED IN GOD...BELIEVED IN JESUS.....BUT.....THEY FINALLY CAME.....

THEY HAD QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CATHOLIC FAITH.... AND RCIA IS WHERE YOU GET THE ANSWERS.....SO THEY CAME....AND THEY GOT THE ANSWERS THEY WERE LOOKING FOR.....AND SO MUCH MORE.

(5)

THEY ALSO LEARNED; **THAT THE CATHOLIC FAITH** WAS NOT SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE CHRISTIAN FAITH THEY LEARNED AS A CHILDSURE, THE WAY CATHOLICS WORSHIPED WAS A LITTLE DIFFERENT, BUT THEY BELIEVED IN THE SAME JESUS.....THE SAME GOD.....PROFESSED THE SAME FAITH AND SAID MANY OF THE SAME PRAYERS..... AND IN FACT, THIS PERSON LEARNED MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN..... ABOUT FAITH IN GOD....AND... THE PROMISES OF CHRIST THAN THEY HAD EVER LEARNED IN THEIR FORMER CHURCH. OF COURSE, SOME OF THIS, THEY KNEW WAS BECAUSE THEY WERE LEARNING IT AS AN ADULT....AND BECAUSE THEY WERE TRULY INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT IT...

AND GUESS WHAT.....THEY ALSO FOUND OUT WHAT WAS MISSING... IT WAS **COMMUNITY**!!!!!! WHEN THEY JOINED THE CHURCH THAT EASTERTHEY JOINED THE COMMUNITY THEY HAD BEEN MISSING.....

WHEN THEY WENT TO MASS, THEY WERE NO LONGER GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS.....THEY BECAME A PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.....FULLY PARTICIPATING IN WORSHIP..... IN FACT, THIS PERSON OF WHOM I SPEAK WAS SO MOTIVATED.....THEY SPONSORED OTHERS THROUGH THE SAME RCIA PROCESS.....FOR 6 STRAIGHT YEARS!

(6)

OUR FRIEND LATER CONTINUED THEIR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, JOINED A PROGRAM WITH THE DIOCESE OF SHREVPOR, AND LAST YEAR, WAS ORDAINED A DEACONAND STANDS BEFORE YOU NOW.....A BETTER MAN....A BETTER HUSBAND....A BETTER FATHER AND GRANDFATHER.....A BETTER CHRISTIAN.....BECAUSE OF THIS RCIA PROCESS.....AND I TELL YOU THIS NOW BECAUSE THIS SAME "RCIA" PROCESS" WILL BEGIN AGAIN AT JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD AUGUST 18TH, JUST TWO WEEKS FROM THIS TUESDAY.....AND A NEW GROUP OF CHRISTIANS WILL BE ENRICHED.....MAYBE FIND THAT MISSING PIECE IN THEIR LIFE, OR SIMPLY IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND ALL THOSE AROUND THEM IN THE PROCESS.

IF YOU ARE HERE TODAY....IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CATHOLIC FAITH.....DON'T WAIT AS LONG AS I DID...LIFE IS SHORT.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE.....AND WE ALL DO....WHO NEEDS FAITH IN THEIR LIFE OR NEEDS TO BE PART OF A VIBRANT FAITH COMMUNITY...ITS UP TO US TO GET THEM HERE.....CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE.....CALL JOHN GUERRIO....JANET MOORE....NORMA SHERMAN.....CALL ME.... IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE YOU WOULD LIKE US TO INVITE....PLEASE CALL US AND LET US KNOW.

(7)

ST. PAUL SAID IN OUR SECOND READING TODAY THAT..... **“THE UNITY AND WITNESS OF THE CHURCH DEPENDS UPON ITS BAPTISED MEMEBERS”** THAT’S US.....AND THAT WITNESS INCLUDES OUR WILLINGNESS TO INVITE OTHERS TO DISCOVER WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW....WHAT THEY NEED TO KNOW.....THAT WORSHIP TOGETHER BRINGS US CLOSER TO CHRIST....KEEPS US CLOSER TO CHRIST..... THE VERY THING THAT WILL GET US TO HEAVEN

IF YOU DIDN’T READ LAST WEEKS BULLETING ARTICLE..... MY FRIEND ANDY HAMPTON SAID IT BEST.....THIS MAN WHO HAD LESS THAN 6 MONTHS TO LIVE TOLD A GROUP OF US MEN BEFORE HE DIED....”IF IT DOESN’T MATTER FOR ETERNITY.....IT DOESN’T MATTER”.....MY FRIENDS, THIS MATTERS.....IT MATTERS FOR THOSE YOU KNOW AND CARE ABOUT.....

SO, DON’T HESITATE.....CALL THOSE PEOPLE YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT CALL THEM TODAY....INVITE THEM TO JOIN RCIA ...OFFER TO COME WITH THEM.....CATHOLICS ARE WELCOME....SPONSORS ARE NEEDED IN FACT; AND YOU’LL LEARN....YOU’LL BE INSPIRED....YOUR FAITH WILL BE ENRICHED.....AND YOU WILL PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN CHANGING SOMEONE ELSE’S LIFE.....FOR ETERNITY.

HOW AWESOME WOULD THAT BE....TO ONE DAY WELCOME THAT PERSON INTO HEAVENOR FOR THEM TO WELCOME YOU INTO HEAVEN.....AND FOR YOU TO BE ABLE TO SAY TO THEM.....YOU SEE....I TOLD YOU SO.....I TOLD YOU IT WOULD BE GOOD!!! GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

