

Pentecost 10

“Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Jesus has recently concluded feeding 5000 people and goes across the water to have some time for himself. A large crowd catches up with him and wants to know who he is, this man who seems to perform miracles. Jesus then says, “You have come to me because I gave you some food, but you need to understand that that food perishes. There is, however, another form of sustenance, one that will do more than simply sustain you physically, and that sustenance is received when you seek to be at one with God.”

This morning we participated in the historic service of the Holy Eucharist, a service that calls us into relationship with God. Jesus told those who came to him, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” These are awesome promises, promises filled with hope and joy, but also with mystery. The Holy Eucharist is referred to as The Holy Mysteries because we human folk cannot define what occurs in this marvelous rite that has been gifted to us. We are challenged to make a leap of faith that this bread and this wine we offer up become for us the refreshing and renewing body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This gift of God is not to be fondled and cherished as some icon, but rather the sustenance that offers us pardon and peace and, equally important, strengthens and encourages us to accept the powerful presence of God within our lives.

We receive this presence for our own spiritual well-being but also that we can find significant ways to be of value to those whom we touch as we journey toward God. I have never perceived the Holy Eucharist as the most significant place we come into the presence of God. God is present wherever we find ourselves at any given moment and we can receive sufficient sustenance to sustain us at any given moment. The Holy Eucharist, however, offers us two things that are important as we search for God’s presence in our daily existence. The first is the value of attempting to center our lives in searching for God. The corporate family comes

together in Eucharist and in essence offers us the opportunity to be still for a time and wait upon God. We can do that anytime in any place, but the family of God, coming to wait together, reminds us of the value of that waiting by corporately entering into that practice of waiting. The second thing we receive from The Holy Eucharist is an attitude toward life as it has been given to us. We are reminded that there is brokenness in life and so we acknowledge our failings before God. We are also reminded that God urges us to bring that brokenness into God's presence and offer it up. God takes that offering--an offering actually of both our short-comings and our joys--blesses that offering and gives it back to us in a way that strengthens our resolve to be at one with God and our neighbor and encourages us to be ever more faithful in seeking the very presence of God.

Every moment of our lives is an opportunity to accept and receive the presence of God. There is no one way to enter into that presence. Each of us, in our uniqueness, must make our own leap of faith. I am convinced that that leap is not a leap into the abyss but into the eternal embrace of God who in some mysterious way will always satiate our hunger and satisfy our thirst to God's glory and our well-being.

Amen