

20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY • B

CHRIST THE KING • AUGUST 15-16, 2009

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So are you hungry? Did you miss dinner/breakfast/lunch? For most of us, hunger really isn't an issue. Our tables, refrigerators and cupboards are generally full. Oh, we may have cravings, like for a hot fudge sundae, but we rarely go hungry.

It is so easy to get a meal these days. You don't have to "waste" time shopping and preparing. All you have to do is pull up to a fast food place. You don't even have to go inside. Just stay in the car, drive through, and food is handed to you. It is hard to stop until the last French fry is gone; the last bit of hamburger eaten and your drink is dry. There is just enough for what was needed; to eat.

But things are different when you dine. Dining is something much different from merely eating. Dining involves abundance; there is always more than enough food. Dining takes time and effort, you have to prepare yourself. Dining involves others. Dining nourishes more than just the body. Dining is a memorable experience that is savored.

So how hungry are we for God? For the past four weeks, the Gospel of John has invited us to reflect on our Eucharistic meal. How do we see this meal? Is it fast food stop on the way of life, which is soon forgotten, or is it a dining experience where we savor our encounter with God and each other?

In John's Gospel, Jesus invites us to his banquet. He tells us that He is "the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

We have been warmly invited to this banquet. We have been invited to eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ; to share his divine life. It is a banquet meal that cannot be rushed. This banquet calls us to take our time in here, so that we can be prepared to go out there. The banquet calls us to listen to the Word of God and hear in it our story, God's story. The banquet demands that we see and welcome everyone. **This abundant banquet also demands that only when the poor are well fed by the generosity of the assembled community is the Eucharist complete.**

So, as we are fed to satisfaction by both bread and word, we are also challenged to recognize and satisfy the hungers of those around us as well as those outside the doors of our church.

It is often easier to prefer fast food to this banquet of eternal life. It is easier to stay in the comfort of the car than to go to the trouble of caring for others and the poor. But we cannot survive long on a fare of fast food.

We have all probably heard, “You are what you eat.” But in reality, food becomes a part of us. However, this food, the Bread and the Wine, made the Body and Blood of Christ, is different. This food does indeed change us. We are what we eat: Christ. Sent into the World.