

Homily. 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 10/11 August 2024.

It all started with a little boy's lunch trustingly given over to Jesus, which in his hands fed a huge crowd. A simple action involving Jesus became a sign pointing to a much deeper and bigger reality, layers of which, like an onion, are now being peeled back revealing the wisdom and work of God.

The crowd came searching for Jesus because they had free food, more than they could possibly eat. Jesus responded to them by saying that God is offering a new bread, a heavenly bread and that he is that nourishing bread, the Bread of Life given to and for the world. Then he asked them to do some vital work, the ongoing work of believing in him.

Today we hear that the people struggled with this offer. They objected to him when he said that he knew God's desires and was the One bringing God's will and gift into being. They complained that they knew his family, his background story, so how then could he claim to be the Living Bread, the abundant and supreme gift from God to us?

To this complaint Jesus responded that he had a mission, a purpose and a calling to do God's work. He said to them that the proof of this was that he was already and always giving himself, giving his very flesh away, in service of the world. He called the people then, as he calls us now, to come and allow him to give his whole life away in serving us. The truth and genuineness of his offer is backed by the authenticity of his life. So, yet another layer of the sign he gave has here been peeled away for us.

This is how John's gospel always works; an action, a sign, decoded and opened up for us revealing God's message, God's ways and will. We have to move along with this revelation or remain blind to the sign's meaning. We have the gift of bread and fish and the sign Jesus created from this, then his own person given and a call that we work on believing in Him. Now, we have Jesus as God's very alive gift to us, giving his flesh away every day in the service of our well being and that of the world.

There is more to come, other layers yet to be peeled away over the next couple of weekends. Right now though we're being asked to understand what it is that Jesus is offering; his entire self as God's service for our good, culminating in his death of the cross when he literally gave his flesh for the world's life. Lastly, grasping his meaning, we can say our yes, our Amen-I believe to everything that he, our Bread of Heaven, brings us.