

## EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY-CYCLE A-AUGUST 6, 2008

One of the many of the things we like to do as human beings is eat. Boy, do we like to eat! Let's set aside the fact that we are the chubbiest people on the planet for now. Eating and drinking are essential for sustaining life, but let's face it; isn't it much more enjoyable sharing a meal with friends or family than eating alone? I know I hate going out to eat by myself. I always feel like someone is looking at me and saying: "The poor thing; he doesn't have anyone to eat with. What a loser." Come on, you all feel the same way!

I dawned on me while preparing for this homily that this desire to share a meal with someone is quite possibly innate; it's built into us at conception. When you look back through salvation history, God Himself very often chose to interact with mankind through this very basic desire. God Himself desires to feed us, not only physically, but spiritually as well.

I'll save the most important example of this Divine desire for a bit later. Long before Jesus became Incarnate on this earth, our Father had already revealed through the prophets that He desired to provide for His people. Today we heard just such an example from Isaiah. Isaiah was consoling the Jewish people who had strayed from God and were now in exile in Babylon. He wanted them to return to the "feast" God desired to

give them; if only they would say “yes” to His desire and turn away from evil and sin. Isaiah seemed to recognize that this innate desire to eat and drink with others could once more be revitalized and the people could once more experience God’s love; again, if they would only say “yes.”

This is exactly what St. Paul means when he tells us today that nothing can separate us from God...except by our own choosing.

Now we come to the example “par excellence.” Our Lord Jesus, both in His divinity and humanity, knew this deep desire. I love the line in the Gospel that says: ...”He was moved with pity for them.” He was so moved, that He chose to stay with the people and cure their sick. By extension of course, that’s you and me; for we are all in need of healing.

In action which prefigured the Holy Mass and the institution of the Holy Eucharist, Our Lord took a few loaves and fishes, looked up to heaven and said the blessing. He then broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples who, in turn, gave them to the people. The pity and love of Jesus was made visible as He provided for their hunger.

Jesus commanded us to continue His mission. The Holy Eucharist; the Sacrament of His enduring Presence, nourishes and strengthens us to do this.

The Eucharist helps us imitate Jesus, by giving service to others. The teaching and feeding of the five thousand tell us that Jesus was concerned about both our physical and spiritual lives. We, his Mystical Body on earth, are to show this same kind of concern for others. We are privileged to share the treasure that is our Catholic Faith. We are humbled to offer others what we ourselves have received and believe. We then can do what Jesus told His disciples to do: “Give them some food yourselves.”