

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 9, 2009

Gospel: (John 6:41-51)

Jesus said “ *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life....I am 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.*”

Reflection:

How many times does Jesus have to teach the same message before the crowd gets it? With such a great gift offered—bread from heaven that brings eternal life—we would think that the crowd would put their problems with belief aside and receive anyway, for the gift far exceeds the cost of belief. But... the bread of heaven isn't without its cost. For Jesus, the cost is the cross. The bread of life is the bread of self-sacrifice. Here is the crux of the problem and here is the giant step forward in this gospel: to eat the bread of life is to eat the bread of suffering. To encounter Jesus by eating the bread of life is to take upon ourselves Jesus' life of self-giving. But unlike the crowd who simply didn't understand, we are able to believe: because Jesus has gone before us and taught us that death leads to life. The Cross leads to Resurrection! (Living Liturgy, p.186)

Vincentian Meditation:

Nothing will nourish us more than focusing on God's love, of which the cross is the symbol. The love that Jesus reveals through the symbol of the cross is: self-giving, sacrificial, forgiving, healing, unifying, loyal to one's friends, powerless, in solidarity with the weak, confident in the power of God. As Vincentians, frequent meditation on the cross, as the symbol of God's love for us and of our love of God, has abiding importance. Jesus' dying love gives meaning to the many “crosses” his followers are called to bear. The following of the crucified Lord is the supreme act of faith; it is a surrender in hope and love into the incomprehensible mystery of God. (Maloney, *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*, p. 45-46)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

In what ways have you found that indeed, the cross leads to resurrection!

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, through your cross and resurrection,

-fill us with your peace!

For the grace to eat the bread of life and the bread of suffering,

-fill us with your strength!

For the grace to accept the crosses in our lives,

-fill us with your love!

For the grace to be witnesses to your resurrection,

-fill us with your joy! Amen

