

## WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

<b>Readings:</b> Exodus 16: 2-4, 12-15 Psalm 78: 3-4, 23-25, 54 Ephesians 4: 17, 20-24 John 6: 24-35	18 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time August 02, 2009
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<b>Word:</b>	<b>Jesus, the living Bread, leads us to eternal life.</b>
<b>Theme:</b>	<b>Jesus leads us to eternal life when we remain new creation in God's image. [Holiness]</b>
<b>Promise:</b>	<b><i>"...whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."</i> (Jn 6: 35b)</b>

### Reflection:

In the first reading from the Book of Exodus, there is a recurring motif of grumbling. Israel grumbles about almost everything - the water they had to drink, the lack of bread and water in the wilderness, the hardships of life in the desert, even the manna from heaven. They wasted no time moving from concern over genuine need to whining, complaining, moaning and murmuring. They complain and blame Moses. They engage in revisionist history and advocate a reverse Exodus, questioning the character and plan of God.

In response, God demonstrates that His grace is unmerited and freely given. He says He will rain down bread from heaven, suggesting that this provision will be both plentiful and clearly visible. God also intends to test their trust by providing two days worth of manna at the end of the week, so that they could rest on the seventh day. God tells Israel they will see His glory, that they will be reminded of who brought them out of Egypt, and that they will know who God is. It will be clear that God has provided for them, that God is in control, and that God can do anything.

The gospel narrates that on the day following the miracles of the loaves and fishes, our Lord finds an eager audience. The people, obviously impressed with what happened, are back following Him. They think that he can provide them with more food and fulfill their material hopes and ambitions without any effort on their part. They fail to understand what the Lord's message was about, and that Jesus is the sign of God's presence in their midst. Jesus reprimands them by saying ***"Amen, Amen I say to you, you are not looking for me because you have seen the signs, but because you have had all the bread you wanted to eat."*** The multiplication of loaves is a sign to arouse their faith and to point to a greater reality, He immediately adds, ***"Do not work for the food that perishes but for the food that endures eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."*** (Jn 6: 27)

Despite the fact that God was speaking to them in ways they should have understood, they wanted God's signs to be accommodated to them (Jn 6: 30). Thus at the end of the gospel, Jesus proclaims, ***"I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."*** (Jn 6:35). Accepting God as He is, is a new satisfaction in our life. For us, this means changing our old ways, and putting on the new self, renewed, transformed, and following God's ways in righteousness and holiness and in truth. This hunger on food is merely the starting point

for Christ's teaching on the deeper hunger we all have for something more than just physical sustenance.

Jesus says He is the bread of life and contrasts Himself with the manna from heaven. What does Jesus mean by this analogy? Bread was the staple food in those days. Without bread, they would literally die. Jesus is saying that in order to have life, we must have Him in our lives. Bread is suited for everyone. Bread is something everyone can eat. Christ knows our most basic needs and meets them. Bread must be eaten daily. Remember from the Lord's Prayer; "**Give us today our daily bread.**" We need to seek and encounter Jesus 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We cannot grow spiritually without having Jesus in our life. Jesus is the Bread of Life for He is essential to our daily life, health, well-being and strength. Jesus is unlike manna, because with himself as 'Bread', He gives us the gift of eternal and lasting life, not just temporal life or energy for one day at a time.

Here Jesus presents himself to us as a gift, *gratis*. Are we takers of Christ's offer? Jesus takes us directly to the source of all life, straight to God, in order to find life. Jesus tells us not to look for earthly things, such as manna, but only God who truly satisfies us. He challenges us to think about what we really need. What we really need is to know how God loves us, how God wants us to have a passion for Him, how to find our purpose in Him, how to trust and hope in Him, and how to, to believe and rest in His grace.

As we listen to the word of Jesus we come to realize that while food is basic to our human existence, something more is required for us to live. There is spiritual nourishment needed by our human hearts, a yearning of the spirit that Jesus wants us to be aware of, and which He alone can meet and satisfy. At this depth is our hunger for God.

Our path is not an easy one, we need to revive our personal commitment, restore our personal relationship with Him, and make His Word come alive in our lives. We need to fortify ourselves with prayers, the sacraments, godly instruction and witnessing to triumph over the evils of the day and overcome the pressures of the world. These we find in Jesus, the living bread, source of our life who will lead us to eternal life.

The word of God is the total person of Jesus Christ. Thus, when we partake of the Eucharist, we eat the entire reality of His word – the flesh and blood, the very spirit of Jesus Christ – and our temporal human life is fused into His divine eternal life. It is the food that is not "perishable", but remains unto eternal life (Jn 6: 27).

So let us do our part to change ourselves and to turn the world around. Let us begin by not trying to make God into our limited, preconceived image. Let us remember instead, that we are made in God's image, not He in ours. Let us do what the letter to the Ephesians preaches, put on the new self, created in God's way.

#### Prayer

Heavenly Father, increase our faith and satisfy our hunger for Christ your Son Jesus, the Living bread, as we make our journey through the difficult moments of life. You call us to holiness, may we respond to your call for a life of grace by living a good life, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Let the light of your glorious Son clarify the meaning of our lives and show us the way to you. In Jesus name. Amen

**Suggested Personal Reflection:**

1. Is Jesus as real to you spiritually as something you can taste or handle? How does your life reflect who you think Jesus is?
2. How important is Christ to you? Is he important enough for you to want to tell people about Him and make sacrifices to make Him known as the Living Bread?

**Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:**

August 3, 2009 (Mon):	Nm 11: 4-15; Ps 81: 12-17; Mt 14: 13-21
August 4, 2009 (Tue):	Nm 12: 1-13; Ps 51: 3-7, 12-13; Mt 14: 22-26
August 5, 2009 (Wed):	Nm 13: 1-2, 25; 14: 1, 26-29, 34-35; Ps 106: 6-7, 13-14, 21-23; Mt 15: 21-28
August 6, 2009 (Thur):	Dn 7: 9-10, 13-14; Ps 97: 1-2, 5-6, 9; 2 Pt 1: 16-19; Mk 9: 2-10
August 7, 2009 (Fri):	Dt 4: 32-40; Ps 77: 12-16, 21; Mt 16: 24-28
August 8, 2009 (Sat):	Dt 6: 4-13; Ps 18: 2-4, 47, 51; Mt 7: 14-20

***"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"***