Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time — August 6, 2023

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Deep, total human fulfillment is a gift received in the mutual presence and affirmation of a loving relationship. It is these which nurtures and deeply satisfies the human heart. The Bible affirms this when it says, “Not by bread alone shall one live.” Food alone can’t satisfy, but a meal given in a context of love provides the deepest satisfaction. In such moments there may be an inflow of presence and love to one's deepest being, and one may be strengthened and filled with joy to the core.

It is something like this that St. Matthew means when he says “They all ate and were satisfied.” The people, longing for the presence and healing and wisdom of God, had followed Jesus out into the wilderness. Single-mindedly they continued to focus their attention on him, forgetting about their practical and physical needs. Seeing their longing and attentiveness, divine love overflowed in Jesus' heart. As St. Matthew says, “He had compassion on them”; he healed them, fed them, and most of all, rejoiced with them in mutually affirming presence. They were satisfied to the very core of their beings.

Jesus fed and satisfied the people in a communal meal. We now celebrate that same reality in our weekly community Eucharist. These are the moments in which Jesus most concretely reaches out to fulfill our longing and to unite us with himself. Yet most of us experience other moments of deep satisfaction as well. Other moments – moments of shared love with spouse, family or friends, moments of contemplative prayer, moments of joy in nature or art – sometimes even seem to have more intensity and power than the experience of the Eucharist.

It almost goes without saying that it is important not to be seduced by sheer experimental intensity. Life usually teaches us fairly quickly that intense highs can be illusory, and that following their lead may sometimes lead to disaster. Yet peak experiences of human pleasure and joy can also be one of the ways in which the ultimate and total kind of satisfaction – the satisfaction that can only come from God, and which is given fully in the Eucharist -overflows into every corner of God's creation. Every authentic experience of goodness is a participation at some level in the goodness of God.

In fact, for most people, human experiences of love and satisfaction are absolutely foundational to the ability to appreciate the love God has for us. A common image of total satisfaction is the nursing infant in the arms of a tenderly loving mother. Psychologists now affirm that an adequate experience of being lovingly held and fed as an infant lay a foundation for all future love relationships, including the love relationship with God. Just as the infant's experience of love is a foundation for mature loving, so every human experience of fulfillment can point toward the reality of ultimate fulfillment in God.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**August 8**	**11:00AM**
NO MASS		
Wed.	**August 9**	**11:00AM**
NO MASS		
Thur.	**August 10**	**11:00AM**
NO MASS		
Fri.	**August 11**	**11:00AM**
NO MASS		
Sat.	**August 12**	**4:30PM**
Rolando Cruz†		Bob† & Lydia
Sun.	**August 13**	**9:00AM**
Lena McCrossen †		ICF #14
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
Theresa Jurik (birthday)		Family

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