



# OUR LADY OF THE LAKE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples of Jesus Christ.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME  
AUGUST 4, 2024

## The Bread of Life - Real Presence

*Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." So they said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."*

John 6:32-35

Every three years as the cycle of scripture readings takes us through St. Mark's Gospel, the shortest of the three "synoptic" gospels, we dip into the Gospel of St. John for five Sundays to hear Jesus' teaching on the Bread of Life. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each tell Jesus' story from different viewpoints (syn-optics) as Fr. John pointed out in last week's homily. St. John, writing much later, now helps us understand the deeper theological meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

This Sunday, we hear Jesus explain the significance of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. The people ask: "What can we do to accomplish the works of God?" Jesus replies: "This is the work of God—believe in the One he sent." Our Lord is revealing to the gathered crowd his divine nature, in contrast to Moses, but also how he will maintain his presence with disciples after his death and resurrection. He says directly: "I am the Bread of Life."

### Manna in the Desert

The journey of the people of Israel through the desert of Sinai can be viewed from two quite different perspectives. From one angle it is the time of perfect harmony between God and his people, the honeymoon period when Israel was faithful to the Lord. But it is also the beginning of their murmuring against the Lord, which grow into infidelities and impatience. Here's a wordplay I discovered in my research: "manna" recasts the Hebrew phrase "manhu" meaning "what is it?"

God miraculously feeds the people with manna in the desert, the "bread of heaven," but they grumble and grow weary of

the journey. How often do we also become impatient when our prayers seem to go unanswered, or take for granted this miraculous gift of the Holy Eucharist?

### The Real Presence

In today's Gospel scene the people also are seeking a sign to believe that Jesus truly is the One sent by God. Jesus tells them—and us—clearly: *I am the Bread of Life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.* More than food for the spiritual journey, Jesus reveals his Divine presence from all time and for all time: God with us, for us, and nourishing us for the journey.

Do we believe? If we profess that the Eucharist is Christ's true and real presence, the fullness of his Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, how does our belief call us to respond in word and deed? Pope Francis suggested in his Angelus address last weekend, that we imitate Jesus' three actions: *Offering, Giving Thanks, and Sharing.* Jesus takes the loaves and fish offered by the young boy, gives thanks to the Father, and finally, shares them with

the community.

What are the ways we might thank the Giver of Life by offering our time and talent and by sharing those gifts for the good of the parish, our family, and local community? May we follow Christ who accomplishes all this in us and declares *I AM the Bread of Life.* We must ponder, and humbly believe.

—Tom Tomaszek, Pastoral Associate

