

Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

What do you Hunger For?

The 10th National Eucharistic Congress was last week, there were more than 50,000 people, who gathered in Indianapolis to adore, praise, and offer the sacrifice of the mass. There were processions, confessions, fellowship, lectures, talks, adoration, and worship. But there were also inconveniences, there were safety concerns, travel, a pause in attendees' regular routines yet those who participated used their treasures, talents, their time to go, participate and I ask myself **why?** Why would you go out of your way, spend your money, time, talents, why do it?

It made me think of you and wonder the same question, **why are you here? Why are you at mass?** Some of you might be here because it is part of your routine, you were taught to go to mass, and you follow. Some of you are here because you want to glorify our Lord, give thanks to our Lord, some are here because you are searching for answers, searching for the how's, how to be happy, how to deal with pain and suffering, how to forgive, how to... (fill in the blank). Some might be here because you don't know where else to go, or you might be here because someone invited you and you wanted to see what it was all about. Ultimately, I believe that the reason why we are here is the same reason why so many joined the eucharistic congress... because we are hungry... because we want to be fed.

So, I ask what are you hungry for?

In the letter to the Ephesians St. Paul states that we should live with all **humility, gentleness, patience, unity, peace and love...** Is that what we are seeing in our society today? If not, I think that we are hungry for that...

This year is an election year for us in the U.S., election years are usually divisive years, but for some reason this year it seems to be ramping up. About two weeks ago, there was an assassination attempt on former president Donald Trump, the attempt left casualties, injuries and even dead. This event has created even more division in our nation and no matter what viewpoint you hold, or what party you support, you can feel the polarization in our nation... **Yet we were created for unity... We are hungry for unity...**

February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, escalating to war. 2023 continued with conflicts and a civil war in Sudan, Israel, Gaza, Yemen, and Myanmar. Around the world, more people are dying in fighting, being forced from their homes and needing life-saving aid than in previous decades. **Yet we were created for peace... We are hungry for peace...**

Poverty is one of the most urgent challenges of our time. According to the World Bank in 2022, 11.5% of the United States' population, 37.9 million people, lived in poverty. Is not any better around the world, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of children living in extreme poverty, reaching 40%... **Yet we were created to help, to be compassionate... We are hungry for compassion.**

Fifth Third bank had a survey of 1,000 people nationwide and nearly 80 percent of respondents rated themselves as being patient. But more than half of the participants stated that they hung up the phone after being on hold for one minute or less. 71 percent frequently exceed the speed limit to get to their destination faster. 56 percent will pass a slow walker after 10 seconds. 60 percent of respondents have honked at a driver in front of them at a traffic light that has turned green. Think about that impatience with our relationships... **Yet patience is a great virtue ...We are hungry for patience.**

American Psychiatric Association (APA) finds that, early in 2024, 30% of adults say they have experienced feelings of loneliness at least once a week, 10% say they are lonely every day. 30% of Americans aged 18-34 say they were lonely every day or several times a week. **Yet we were created for communion... We are hungry for companionship.**

What are you hungry for?

In the 2nd book of Kings, we heard of a man that went to Elisha and provided 20 loaves of bread... God made a miracle and transformed those 20 loaves into enough food to feed 100 people. But something that catches my attention is that God allowed this "unknown" man to participate in the miracle, to collaborate, this man served as an agent, conduit for those 100 people. This unknown man helped satisfy the hunger of the 100 people.

In the gospel we see Jesus turning 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish into enough food to satisfy 5000 plus and still have left over. These people were hungry and were fed,

but even though we focus on physical feeding, I bet that they were spiritually hungry, they were also hungry for **unity, peace, compassion, patience, for love**. Jesus fulfilled these needs, he is that perfect union of the physical and the spiritual, the human and the divine, he fed their physical bodies but also their souls. Jesus chose to do this by the assistance of others. The story tells us that Andrew mentioned the 5 loaves and 2 fish, Andrew served like the unknown man for Elisha, he was a conduit, an agent in helping feed the people, in satisfying their hunger.

You and I are being called to be collaborators, agents and help our Lord, feed the hungry... **Why are you here?** You are here because deep inside you are hungry... You are hungry for **peace, unity, compassion, communion, patience, for love**. If you feel that you are hungry for peace, chances are that you are being called to be an agent of peace for those around you... if you are hungry for love... chances are that you are being called to be an agent of love to those around you...

So, pray to the lord that at this table, at this banquet, at this eucharist, he grants you the knowledge to know what you hunger for, and remember as the psalmist states "the hand of the Lord feeds us... He answers all our needs."