

# I am the living bread !

*I am the bread of life.  
Whoever comes to me will never go hungry,  
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*

**SPRINGLINE PARISH – TRINITY 10 2018 – READING: JOHN 6. 24-35**  
(Other Lectionary Readings of the day – Exodus 16.2-4, 9-15, Psalm 78. 123-29, Ephesians 4. 1-16)

The other day I went to the barber and as it almost always happens, no matter how you try to have a quiet time, it just is not possible especially if you are a priest. And as a result, it is not the first time barbers have challenged me and provided ice-breakers for my sermons. So apart from a host of introductory questions and telling me of his Polish girl friend and so on, he suddenly asked me what I do and when I did tell him what I did he seemed quite taken aback so to say ‘Gosh! I should have known it earlier!’ But what astonished me was when he asked me, “How do you prepare the sermon?” I began to tell him how it was important for me to ‘feel’ the word within me, that I need to be ‘touched’ and ‘spoken to’ before I can speak....and so on....Seeing me struggling for words, he said, “Oh you mean you must feel it at your gut level....you have to be inspired....hmm that’s good...”

The barber is absolutely right. The Word of God must speak to us at a gut level; it must inspire us, otherwise we are not nourished spiritually!

The Word ‘speaks’ to us, to each in a unique way. The point is, whether we understand intellectually with our minds only, or, whether we let the Word convict us in the inside, touch us, inspire us, ‘speak to our hearts’, ‘feed’ our spirits, ‘slake’ our spiritual thirst, this can happen if we learn to abide and live by the Word; if we learn to ‘listen’ to the Word; if we learn to live in the Word.

What struck me in the Word of God today, which nourishes my heart and soul is “I am the Bread of Life. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever.” John 6. 35, 51b)

Meal times have been special since ancient times. It is like a daily rite of passage and liminal experience as a family, as a community. Whether you eat at a candle lit dinner or around an evening fire in the dark of the evening as our ancestors did, meal times are special times when we can be ourselves, we can unwind, communicate and share the truth of ourselves.

Jesus understood not just the metabolic, vital importance of food, but also the symbolic value of a meal. There was no better way of expressing the utter vitality and necessity of faith in Jesus than to say that he is the Bread of Life (verse 51). It was like he was saying to us: you can’t live without food, neither can you live without Christ if you are a

Christian! Lack of material nourishment leads to death and lack of spiritual nourishment leads to spiritual death!

“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life.” (verse 54) It is as simple as that!

There are two ways we can look at the words of Jesus “I am the Living Bread...whoever eats of this bread will live for ever.” (51) One, Jesus of the Bread or Jesus of the sacrament and two, Jesus of faith.

First, the words of Jesus seen in a sacramental way in which the bread that is consecrated by the priest becomes for us the Body of Christ; that is the bread is a living sign that symbolises a living truth.

Second, we see the words of Jesus in a spiritual way in which Jesus is the real spiritual food that satisfies us, our hearts, our spirits. In whichever way we look, we need faith to understand.

*The key message is Jesus is the Living Bread that gives us Eternal Life!*

There is no way we can lose ourselves in useless controversies of the evangelical and catholic traditions that put the word and sacrament at loggerheads. We need to see our Christian life as based on both the Word as well as the Sacrament. The Bread and the Bible!

Jesus uses the first person, “I am the living bread!”

The Bread is Jesus that gives eternal life!

The Book (Word) is Jesus that gives eternal life!

We need both the Word and the Sacrament to live fully our christian lives as both the Word and the Sacrament give us the fullness of our faith! That is why the Holy Communion Service is so significant for our christian life. We are nourished both by the Word of God as well as the Bread of Life – Jesus!

Let us pray

[ST Mattapally]