

LIVING EUCHARIST INITIATIVE

“Common Threads” – Homily Helps & Intercessions

July 2009

July 5, 2009 – 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel 2:2-5 – *Ezekiel receives his mission*

Mark 6:1-6a – *Jesus is rejected in his own hometown*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

When Ezekiel first received his vocation, before the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC, his mission was to call its sinful inhabitants to repentance. After the holy city was demolished and its people deported, God asked him to console the exiles and give them hope for the future. Where did Ezekiel get the strength to confront his own people and then to console those he had previously chastised? He was nourished by the word of God which gave him the inner strength to carry out his mission.

Like the prophets before him, Jesus found it difficult to carry out the mission he had received from God the Father. In today’s gospel, his own fellow citizens turn a deaf ear to his message simply because he is one of them. Why was he not discouraged by their lack of faith or by their refusal to accept his message? Jesus was able to carry on his mission even when his efforts were not appreciated because he was strengthened by his union with the Father whose love nourished and supported him.

Our weekly celebration of the Eucharist commissions us to carry on God’s work amid the people of our own day. In our attempts to do so, we often experience the same frustration that Jesus and the prophets once felt. How can we carry on our mission when we, too, are faced with indifference and incomprehension? We can do it because the Eucharist that commissions us also nourishes and strengthens us for our task. We receive Christ so that Christ can work through us; we are united in Christ so that as his mystical body we can carry on his work in spite of any difficulties we meet.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That in the celebration of the Eucharist that commissions us to do God’s work we may always find the spiritual nourishment that we need to fulfill our call. We pray to the Lord.

That our involvement in the diocesan *Living Eucharist* Initiative will help us tap into the perpetual source of nourishment and strength that the celebration of the liturgy offers us. We pray to the Lord.

July 12, 2009 – 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Amos 7:12-15 – *Mission of Amos*

Mark 6:7-13 – *The mission of the Apostles*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

Amos, who lives in the southern Kingdom of Judah, is sent to preach at a breakaway northern shrine set up to rival the temple in Jerusalem. He is opposed by the local priest who questions his right to preach in the Kingdom of Israel. Amos freely admits that he was not trained to be a prophet but asserts that he was commissioned to bring the people of Israel back to God. The call he has received sustains him in ministry despite the opposition of those who reject his message.

In today’s gospel, Jesus sends the Apostles on their first mission. They are to preach repentance, cast out demons, and heal the sick. In short, they are sent to carry on his work. Even though the task already seems daunting, Jesus forbids them to make even the ordinary preparations for a journey. They are to take “no food, no sack, no money in their belts.” They must learn to act in total dependence on God, for it is only by allowing God to work through them that they can carry on Jesus’ work.

Every celebration of the Eucharist is a commissioning rite. The liturgy we are celebrating sends us out like Amos to call our brothers and sisters back to God. It charges us, like the Apostles, to carry on Jesus’ own mission. We may well feel that the commission given us is beyond our ability to fulfill, but the Eucharist itself empowers us to complete our task. Nourished by Christ’s word and fed with his body and blood, we become his mystical body capable of doing his work in the world.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That our participation in the diocesan *Living Eucharist* Initiative may deepen our sense of mission and help us to utilize the spiritual resources which are available to us in the celebration of the liturgy. We pray to the Lord.

That our reception of the holy Eucharist might build us more perfectly into the body of Christ so that we can more effectively carry out his work in the world. We pray to the Lord

July 19, 2009 – 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 23:1-6 – *I will gather the remnant of my flock*

Psalms 23 – *The Lord is my shepherd*

Mark 6:30-34 – *Jesus moved with compassion for the crowd*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

Mark’s Gospel is too short to provide a meaningful reading for each Sunday of Ordinary time. So, after today’s reading, which sets the stage for the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes, we will supplement the Marcan narrative with five passages taken from the sixth chapter of St. John’s Gospel. This series of six readings which begins today gives us the perfect opportunity to talk about this year’s *Living Eucharist* theme, “**nourished.**”

After the Apostles returned from their first mission, Jesus took them to a deserted place in the hope of finding some much-needed rest. When they arrived at their destination, they discovered a large crowd waiting for Jesus. The disciples were probably annoyed by this invasion of their privacy, but Jesus displayed a very different attitude.

Mark tells us that Jesus felt compassion for the crowd “for they were like sheep without a shepherd.” In other words, because their own spiritual leaders had let them down, Jesus was moved to nourish them with his word. In this he mirrors the sentiments of God the Father expressed in our first reading from the Book of Jeremiah. Speaking through the prophet the Lord promised to gather the remnants of his scattered flock and to lead them to their pasture. Now acting through the Good Shepherd, God nourishes his people with the word of life.

We, of course, know what is to follow. After Jesus has nourished them with the word, he will feed them with five barley loaves and two fishes. They will fail to understand the spiritual significance of the gift, but we should not. The multiplication of the loaves and the fishes foreshadows our celebration of the Eucharist in which Christ nourishes us with his word and with his body and blood. When we follow Christ’s teaching and imitate his example we digest and assimilate the food we receive. This helps us to grow and to become more perfectly what we already are, which is Christ’s mystical body through which he continues to show his compassion to those in need.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

That our participation in the diocesan *Living Eucharist* Initiative will make us more aware of the help and support we receive every time we gather for the celebration of the liturgy. We pray to the Lord.

That the spiritual nourishment we receive in the celebration of the Eucharist may sustain our efforts to minister to those in need. We pray to the Lord.

July 26, 2009 – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Kings 4:42-44 – *Elisha feeds 100 people with 20 loaves*

Psalm 145 – *The hand of the Lord feeds us*

John 6:1-15 – *Jesus feeds the multitudes*

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – HOMILY

Today’s gospel reading from the sixth chapter of John replaces the Marcan account of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes, and leads into the discourse on the bread of life which we will be reading for the next four Sundays. Both the miracle and the following discourse show Jesus as the one who nourishes God’s people with his word and with his own flesh and blood.

The story opens with Jesus expressing compassion for the crowd that has come to him. He wants to feed them, but from a human standpoint that seems impossible. He points this out by asking the rhetorical question, “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?” Philip, acknowledging that the disciples can not meet their needs, replies, “Two hundred days’ wages worth of food would not be enough for each one to have a little.” Andrew underlines their lack of resources by saying, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?”

Jesus, surpassing the precedent set by the prophet Elisha in Old Testament times, commands that the five barley loaves and two fishes be set before the crowd of more than five thousand men who have gathered to hear him. The Apostles carry out his orders and, much to their amazement, are able to gather 12 baskets of leftovers after everyone has eaten his fill.

It is obvious that the miracle makes a statement. The crowd realizes that it identifies Jesus as the prophet like Moses whom God has raised up to lead his people, but they misconceive the nature of his leadership. They expect, almost demand, that he give them earthly food rather than continuing spiritual nourishment. This misconception and Jesus’ repeated attempts to clarify it will be the motor that drives the discourse on the bread of life which, in turn, helps us to understand the mystery of the living Eucharist.

For now, it suffices to say that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus meets the needs of all those who come to him. He does not solve all our earthly problems, but he gives us the spiritual nourishment we need to carry on his work in the world. That work was once beyond our ability to accomplish. Now, nourished by the gift we have received, we grow into Christ’s mystical body through which he can continue to nourish all those who come to him in need.

- *LIVING EUCHARIST* “COMMON THREADS” – INTERCESSIONS

Continue Next Page ➔

That our participation in the diocesan *Living Eucharist* Initiative will open our minds and hearts to a greater understanding of the mystery we celebrate and help us to live it out in our daily lives. We pray to the Lord.

That, as the recipients of Jesus' gift of self, we will be motivated to give ourselves to others in love. We pray to the Lord