



## Things to Ponder

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## Homily – 18<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time – John 6:24-35

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### Introduction: Food for the Soul

This Sunday we continue to read from the sixth chapter of John's Gospel and its rich treatment of the Eucharist and its beautiful, consistent focus on Jesus as the lasting Bread of Life. Throughout this passage, the crowd repeatedly does "not get it" and misunderstands Jesus' focus on himself as the Bread of Life. This tragic undercurrent runs through the words of this Sunday's Gospel passage. And you can almost feel Jesus' exasperation in urging the crowd to raise their sights higher and to seek lasting spiritual food (sustenance) that only he can give. But they do not see the gift in front of them! *When do I "miss" seeing God's presence in my daily life?*

The long dialogue exchange between Jesus and the crowd begins with the simple question, "when did you get here?" – but concludes with a more fundamental question, "what sign can you do that we may see and believe in you?" In other words, "prove yourself!" *Do I look for signs from God when I am struggling in my faith journey?*

Sadly, the crowd cannot see beyond the surface. They are unable to see Jesus' true identity. They ask for a sign so they will know for sure he is from God. Yet, how strange this sounds since Jesus has just fed 5,000 people! What more is expected? The conclusion of the dialogue reveals the crowd's blindness. They ask for what Jesus has just told them they have found. "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus answers plainly that he himself is the Bread of Life they seek: "Do not work for food that perishes. I am the Bread of Life that endures forever." *What perishable goods occupy my time and attention? What things should I be working for?*

I would invite you to take time to read and ponder the words from the *Gospel of John 6:24-35*

What word or words caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted/challenged you?

### Further Reflections and Questions:

"Do not ask for the food that perishes but for the food that endures." This is a tough call nowadays. Our world, so competitive and materialist, is moving in the opposite direction – pushing you and me to fulfill our passing needs and desires, and forget all

about what lasts. *I ask for wisdom for knowing how to choose between what lasts and what passes – and for the courage to do what is more important.*

Here Jesus uses the simplest of images. In his day, when diets were simple, bread kept people alive, kept them going. In this Gospel Jesus is saying that he is “the Bread of Life” that nourishes us, strengthens us – keeping us fully alive. *Do you draw life from your friendship with Jesus? Is the Eucharist your “food for the soul?”*

Many people today are searching for God. They are looking for “signs” to know where God is. *Am I such a sign in any way?*

You and I are called to live at a much deeper level!

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