



The Body and Blood of Christ 2005

Deuteronomy 8: 1-16 (read the whole chapter) 1 Cor. 10:14-16 John 6: 51-58

Today we celebrate the astonishing relationship between God and food. We call bread the *staff of life*, I'm not where the saying comes from, but a staff is a sturdy walking stick that is necessary when walking on rough ground. A staff enables you to keep your balance when the going is tough. Bread could also be called the *stuff of life* because for many cultures bread is a necessary part of the daily diet.

Cars and coffee shops have removed us from the need to pack lunch when going on a journey. Except for some rural areas, today the relationship between food and journey has widened.

The use at Eucharist of wafers which bear no comparison to real food (despite the recommendation of the General Instruction 283) has damaged the both power of the symbol of food shared, and of the people of God as one body. We have lost the constant reminder that without spiritual nourishment we will not get far.

We are told to observe the commandments. Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. In other words don't just hear the words but take them in. That is eat them, savour them. The Law of God is not a set of dos and don'ts but a way of life that will lead us from the inside. Comparing God to the food we eat makes it impossible to miss this point.

We are what we eat in the physical realm, so too what we nourish ourselves with, spiritually makes us who we are as disciples. The author of Hebrews, 5: 13, is pulling no punches when he says that we can't grow on a diet of spiritual baby food. The same is true of spiritual junk food and there is a great range of spiritual junk food about.

"When you have eaten your fill, you must bless the Lord, your God for the good country he has given you." The reason for giving thanks is plain. After a good meal it is easy to forget that life is gift, that the land plays an enormous part in our nourishment.

We are confronted on all sides by the consequences of failing to give thanks. Fertile land is reduce to desert, water is polluted, crops are grown for money not food, animals are feed unnatural diets, human beings starve.

After a good meal we could slip into thinking, "It is my own power and the strength of my own hand, that has brought me this wealth." "Remember then that it is God who has given you all these things."

The bounty of the land and the creativity that puts before us a visual as well as a nourishing feast can have only one response, thanksgiving; thanksgiving from a humble, grateful heart.

“I myself am the living bread come down from heaven.” Jesus says if I am your food and drink, then you life will be divine

The Eucharist is the sacrament of spiritual journeying. Assembling with the community, at the community table, is a sign that we are one with a unity modelled on Trinity. Eating and drinking as signs are not enough of themselves, presence is not enough, to unite ourselves with God as our food, requires an attitude of heart which accepts others as true kin.

One loaf, one cup, one people.

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