

## **Pastor Writes**

The theme for our morning's meditation is "Jesus is the bread of life". Bread is one of the basic necessities of life and more so for those who are poor. Bread or roti sustains us physically and nourishes us daily. It gives us the physical strength to carry on with the daily chores of our lives. In the gospel reading for today we notice Jesus making a claim, 'I am the bread of life.' What does he mean by that? In order to understand that, we need to look at the people of Israel wandering in the wilderness where God fed them with Manna and Quails. In the reading from the book of Exodus we notice that the people of Israel were in the wilderness and were grumbling against Moses and Aaron. 'If only we had died in the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.' In spite of all that God had done for them when he delivered them from Egypt the people were still faithless. The Lord said to Moses that he would provide bread to them from heaven. Moses and Aaron communicate this to the assembly that God would rain down bread from heaven and they were to collect it for six days. On the sixth day they were to collect double the amount for the Sabbath. He also provided quails for them as they were complaining about the lack of meat. True to his word they had enough and more to eat. With this miracle Yahweh was showing that he was the one who could sustain Israel. He provided for them during the wilderness journey and showed that he is really the sustainer and provider. God is the one who can see us through all the journeys of life and our wanderings and provide for all our needs. We are to depend on him for our necessities.

What does Jesus mean by claiming to be the bread of life? He had already done many miracles specially in the feeding of the four thousand and the five thousand with the twelve baskets full gathered. Through this Jesus was showing that he was their sustainer. The conversation continues around food and Jesus tells them not to work for food that spoils but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give. Jesus was then questioned about what they must do to fulfill the work God requires. Jesus tells them, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." Jesus tells them that the fundamental work that God calls us to do is to believe in his Son Jesus. They then remind Jesus that their ancestors were given manna in the wilderness by Moses. Jesus reminds them that it was the Father who gave them manna not Moses. Jesus says, "For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." The people then ask him for this bread. Jesus declared, "I am the bread of Life, whoever comes to me will never go hungry, whoever believes in me will never go thirsty." We notice the misunderstanding of the Jews here. Jesus was talking about himself being the true bread that comes down from heaven but the Jews were thinking about physical bread which would keep their stomachs full. Jesus also said that the bread that comes down from heaven gives life to the world. Jesus is the life-giver. By believing in his life and work we too can receive life.

What do we do for our spiritual sustenance? Our deep thirst and hunger for material things is actually a symptom of a deeper thirst to satisfy us internally. Physical bread or material things can only satisfy us for a little while, but the spiritual bread which is Jesus himself is the one who can really satisfy us. He is the only one who can fulfill the fundamental yearning of the human spirit. That is why Jesus says that whoever comes to him will never go hungry, and whoever believes in him will never be thirsty. Deep satisfaction can only come from the presence of the Lord in our lives. The sacraments that we participate in every Sunday at the Lord's Table is to show symbolically that we are dependent on him for our spiritual sustenance. Once we taste of him we will be deeply satisfied and will not be craving for other things. May God help us to truly feed on the bread of life.

*Shalom,*  
**Paul Swarup**