

Well satisfied

9 8 15

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of your humble servants:
and, that they may obtain their petitions,
make them ask such things as please you .

Our text may be found in today's reading from John 6 and is verse 35:

'Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."'

Do you like eating ? I must confess I do love food, good food, and living here in France, we are blessed with so such a great choice of what to eat. And if you're thirsty, a glass of water or a cup of tea can be just the thing ! There is no doubt that to live, we all need to eat and to drink and here is Jesus, in today's text, telling us clearly that he is the source of food and drink.

Literally, at the start of John chapter 6, Jesus has fed the 5,000, mysteriously multiplying a boy's five loaves and two fish to produce a sit-down picnic that satisfies a crowd of folk who've come to hear him teach and preach and perhaps to see him perform the odd miracle or two.

Two chapters earlier on in John's gospel, at the well at Sychar, without a bucket to draw up the water, Jesus literally challenges an unnamed Samaritan woman, who actually does have a bucket, to ask him for living water.

But the food and drink that Jesus promises them and us is not literal – though in one sense, of course, given the bread and wine of Holy Communion, it is. The bread that Jesus, the Word of God, is offering us is his teaching and the possibility of serving God by what we do and think and say. We can be fed by doing the will of God. What is thirst quenching is the satisfaction found in being in touch with God the Son and connected with God the Father through God the Holy Spirit flowing in and through us.

The great insight of Judaism is into the reality of God – holy, wholly different, beyond representation. The great insight of Christianity is in the incarnation. That God takes on himself, in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ, our humanity. God in him becomes embodied, enfleshed.

And it is to us in our flesh that Jesus makes this profound appeal to our most basic needs. In him, our hunger can be satisfied and our thirst quenched.

I don't know what you think of the Michelangelo painting of creation of Adam on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. A bearded, flying God is reaching out to touch a supine, naked Adam. And that – though blasphemous to Jewish and Islamic eyes – aptly encapsulates the essence of our Christian understanding:

God, Spirit-embodied, reaching out to us, enfleshed, and touching us and satisfying us if only we would come to him.

So today, when shortly we will all go off to have Sunday lunch – good food and something good to drink – may we have the grace to see that true satisfaction comes not only from these good gifts but also from the author of creation who has gifted us not only with life but also with the possibility of being in touch with him, fed and sustained by the bread of life and the living water which is his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Friend and Saviour.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Preached at the Eucharist

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G: Sermons 32 : Well satisfying

