

FOOD THAT ENDURES

I love the challenge of grocery shopping. Looking for expiration dates allows me to inspect the entire packaging of the product. For some, it is on the lid or the bottom. Those are easy. Some expiration dates are microscopic in size and printed next to the label. Some use abbreviations and others have been smeared. The inquisition goes further as we analyze the meaning of some terms. If it says "sell by", does that mean it has a few more days? What if it says "best by?" Does that give it a shelf life of another week? And if you eat something the day after the best by date, is there a drastic change in taste and texture? When a can of something is still good in 2024, I sometimes find myself questioning what is in it?

Jesus in today's Gospel invites us to explore the food that endures for eternal life. This is unlike any food produced on earth. Jesus enters the bread and enters the wine. In this divine action, that which was perishable becomes eternal. The transcendent Son of God brings eternal love to the food of the new and eternal covenant. Why is this food different? It becomes the Son of God. It nourishes our entire being. Our soul is magnified in the magnificence of our Savior. Unlike the old covenant, Jesus will shed His blood for us, wash away our sin, and offer us new life. All of this is eternal, with no expiration date.

Jesus is not only the Bread of Life and He tells His followers this, but also, He is the living bread of our community. We are a Eucharistic community. We are a people renewed in this love and invited to receive the Eucharist as often as possible. When I think about searching for recipes, making sure I have all the ingredients, I spend time in preparation. God prepared the world for His only begotten Son to be this food that endures for eternal life.

May we cherish this gift,



Father John Ouper