

THE BREAD OF LIFE

THE LIFE BREAD OF OUR COMMUNITY

We gather with the knowledge and faith that Jesus is the Bread of Life. We gather with the faith and knowledge that Jesus comes down from heaven. We gather in the faith and knowledge that Jesus gave us His flesh for the life of the world. When I was a nature director at a scout camp, I had the privilege to be a counselor for the Environmental Science Merit Badge. Every week campers would arrive at class and encounter varied experiences and teachings about ecosystems. During the week they were to sign up for a group lunch with me. I would take the small group to a bridge over one particular inlet. In my backpack I had only oranges and bread. I would give each of them a piece of bread and ask them to just look at it. I would ask them to explore the texture of the crust and notice the differences within the slice. I then would ask them where it came from. Some would answer "the store". As I pressed on, others would answer "a bakery". Eventually, the conversation would lead back to the wheat. Before allowing them to eat the bread we would discuss the grain and how it had to be harvested, and yet even before that, the seed had to be planted then sprout, and then grow. There is a lot to one slice of bread. I encouraged them to taste the entire process as they consumed it. While it seemed like torture to them, so often we do a lot of consuming of food without thinking about the magnitude of what it takes to produce it and what it takes to grow.

The Lord is inviting us to enter into this process. We are never to take for granted this food He gives us. While it nourishes our entire being, it also has a divine source. Unlike the grain of wheat, the source of this food is eternal love. It contains the love of the entire Trinity. This flesh has been given for the life of the world. This Savior hung upon the cross gasping for breath until He died for our sins. When we consume this bread, we are invited to pause to reflect upon what we are consuming. This flesh walked on water and called the disciples by name. This flesh raised the dead to life and healed those with leprosy. All of this is a part of the process that allows us to receive the most Holy Eucharist. How powerful a meal!

The invitation and the challenge is to never take this meal for granted.



Father John Ouper