

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Two old men are chatting. One man says, "My friend, you must try this memory pill I'm taking. I remember everything. It's an amazing memory booster." The other man says, "Sounds wonderful. What is the name of the pill?" The first man says, "Hmm! The name of the pill ... Let's see ... Hmmm, what is the name of the flower produced on a garden plant with thorns? It's red ... You give it on Valentine's Day." The other man says, "A rose?" The first man says, "Yes, that's right!" Then, calling for his wife, he says, "Rose, what is the name of that pill which I take to boost my memory?"

Dear Friends,

All of us have thirst for something in our life. We try to accomplish it in our life time. It may be through our efforts and with the help of the friends and family. We try to take care of our physical and other needs by ourselves.

The liturgy today invites us to come to God who takes care of all our needs both physical and spiritual. In the first reading, God promises he will feed the people well. The prophet brings comfort to God's people toward the end of Babylonian exile. He gives us food and life. Both are necessary for all the human being. It is a renaissance for the people of Israel. It is the continuation of the divine and human relationship. This relationship depends not on human fidelity but God's steadfast love and loyalty. We read in the last line of the reading that he renews the everlasting covenant and restores the benefits assured to David.

In the second reading, St. Paul says that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Forces of this world and unseen forces in the cosmos can never separate us from the love of Christ. This is more of personal conviction. God's love invites us all the time to have our life in full.

In the Gospel today, Jesus took care of their needs both physical and spiritual. Today he takes care of all our needs. He was moved with pity. We see our God as compassionate, merciful and loving. The bread that Christ offers stills the deep hunger of all. He took care of the people and also taught the disciples to continue that. That's why he said, "you give them food for yourselves." Jesus ascertains the providential care for the people.

In Matthew's account, Jesus acts out of his great compassion for the crowds. First, he challenges the disciples to give what they have — five loaves and two fish. Then he performs the four-fold action that prefigures the Eucharist: He takes, raising His eyes to Heaven blesses, breaks and gives the bread and fish to the assembled multitude, making of them a community of the Lord's banquet. Just as God supplies the needs of all living

beings, so Jesus also heals the sick and feeds the hungry. This event indicates God's power in Christ as well as His mercy. The food Jesus gives stills the hunger of all and the life after our death.

The lessons we learn today

1. God is compassionate, merciful and loving.
2. He cares for people's needs. His care satisfies the people who trusts him.
3. He asks us to care for the needs of the people.

Quote from Mother Teresa: "we must be faithful to that smallness of the Eucharist, that simple piece of bread which even a child can take in... we have so much that we don't care about small things. If we do not care, we will lose our grip on the Eucharist- on our lives."

Questions for reflections:

1. Can I identify my spiritual needs or thirst?
2. Can I help my fellow parishioners to identify their physical and spiritual needs?