

## 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B

1. It is a crisis as dangerous as the war in Iraq And Afghanistan
2. A crisis as serious as the poisonous pollution left behind by September 11<sup>th</sup>.
3. A crisis as threatening as terrorism or AIDS.
4. And yet this crisis has gotten almost no media coverage.
  - a. And yet it should, for it is all around us.
5. The crisis is food - not too little, but too much!
  - a. We Americans eat too much!, Government statistics report that more than 60% of us are overweight.
6. this is a crisis for us medically,
7. This is a crisis for us psychologically,
8. But this morning, this is also a crisis for us theologically,
  - a. Because our weight makes us incapable of understanding this morning's scriptures
    - i. especially the Gospel.
  - b. Why? Because although we all feel hunger, some of us all the time,
    - i. hunger is for us is at worst an annoyance,
  - c. solved by a quick trip to McDonald's .
  - d. And thus we have no idea of what it is to be hungry.
    - i. So hungry that we would do anything to get something to eat.
9. The people of Israel understood this;
10. For like most primitive societies their life revolved around food.
  - a. Men worked to grow it, to catch it, to hunt it.
  - b. Women worked all day to grind it, to prepare it, to cook it.
  - c. When times were good there was usually enough to eat;
    - i. but often times were not good.
    - ii. **War** pulled men away from their work to fight,
      1. forcing them abandon their fields
    - iii. **poverty** pulled women into the workforce,
      1. forcing them to abandon their families.
    - iv. **injustice** robbed men and women of their right to own the food they produced, forcing them to pay it out as taxes to the king,
      1. or as tithes to the temple.
11. The people of Israel were hungry! but not just for food;
  - a. They were hungry for the **peace** that would let them grow it
  - b. The **justice** that would let them keep it
  - c. And the **mercy** that would let them share it generously with all in need.
12. And as the people of Israel looked around them,
  - a. they knew that they could never truly satisfy that hunger;
    - i. Only God could;
13. and thus when they spoke of God's kingdom breaking into their world
  - a. to rule "on earth as in heaven" to quote the Our Father,
  - b. They spoke of it in the only way they could think of, the only way that made sense;

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14. they spoke of it as a feast.; of peace, of justice and of mercy.
15. A large crowd of some five thousand men, and thus who knows how many women and children, followed Jesus across the sea of Galilee in this morning's Gospel
  - a. why?
  - b. Because they were hungry;
    - i. hungry for the peace that came to those he healed
    - ii. Hungry for the justice which came through that healing,
      1. Which corrected the injustice of illness
    - iii. Hungry for the mercy that was shown in his healing.
  - c. However, they were also hungry for something else: food!
    - i. When Jesus asked if there was any way for them to satisfy their own hunger,
    - ii. His disciples thought he was crazy, for they were far from their towns and their homes, there was no way they could.
16. But then Jesus takes a few loaves and fish, he blesses them, and gives them, and gives, them, and gives them again.
  - a. He gives them until they all finally had their fill.
17. Now of course, the people of Israel had heard of this before; they all knew the story of when Elisha fed one hundred people with twenty loaves of barley.
  - a. And they knew that although Elisha had done it, it was really God who did.
18. But now they had seen with their own eyes, and tasted it with their own mouths,
  - a. and it began to dawn on them that Jesus would satisfy their hunger;
    - i. not only their hunger for food;
      1. but their deeper hunger for peace, for justice and for mercy
  - b. In Jesus they had found God, breaking into their world here and now,
    - i. Of God's kingdom of peace and justice and mercy.
      1. And they had found it when they shared with Jesus and a meal.
19. We, with our food filled kitchens and stomachs, might not understand the hunger of those five thousand people in today's gospel for food.
  - a. But surely we understand their deeper hunger?
    - i. For we live in a world where peace has been shattered by war in Iraq and Afghanistan
    - ii. Where justice has been ruptured by violence abroad and terrorism here at home.
20. And where mercy is all too often replaced with prejudice against those who are different than us.
21. No , When it comes to peace, and justice and mercy,
  - a. we are every bit as hungry as they are,
  - b. Yet all too often we forget what they knew
    - i. That ultimately that hunger is only satisfied in God.

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1. Which is why they came to Jesus across the Sea of Galilee, and if we are honest with ourselves, why we are here.
- ii. For in a world shattered by war and violence and prejudice,
  1. we gather here; the rich here and poor, the powerful and the powerless, people who speak different languages, come from different cultures and live different lifestyles.
  2. all of us in one place around one table to share in one meal with Jesus. Why? For the same reason those people did that day in Galilee.
    - a. because we are hungry for God's kingdom; and if you open your eyes and look around you, you'll see it breaking in right here and right now, as we gather together with Jesus and he given himself to us in this meal.