

prophet, but there is a greater, true gift from God himself. That gift of course is Jesus who comes to us especially in Prayer, in our fellow Christians, in Baptism and, overwhelmingly, in the Eucharist. He satisfies of our hungers and give real life, not life for the body alone, but life for body and soul. Jesus feeds us one himself, Body and Blood.

We do Jesus a great disservice with our shabby translations of some of his words that we hear every Sunday at Church. We hear *do this in remembrance of me*, a poor attempt at turning the rare Greek word, ἀνάμνησις (*anamnesis*), into cogent English. Perhaps at one time the translation fit with the then meaning of *remembrance*, but, in reality, the word today is better rendered as a phrase such as *make present*. Jesus wants us to do this so that he may be present with us always.

Please prepare Saint John 6:35,41-51 for next Sunday

Additional Note

We Christians would benefit from a visit to Friday night services at a synagogue. We'd discover a Jewish service (though usually in Hebrew) that has a certain familiarity for us. Viz: The typical observance begins with prayers and includes selections from the psalms. Two lessons are read from Scripture² The first lesson is taken from the Books of the Law, the *Torah* (the first 5 books in the Bible), the second from the Prophets. A sermon is given, and, after additional devotions, the service concludes with an exchange of Peace. Everyone will say *Good Sabbath* or perhaps *Got Shabbat*.

The first part of our Christian Eucharist through The Peace was fashioned from the Synagogue liturgy.

be caught with nets. And *water from the rock*? For thousands of years the desert dwellers made water courses on the hills which led to underground rock cisterns. The rare desert rain was stored for future use. Today's Israelis farm the Negeb Desert using water runs laid out thousands of years ago.

² Scholars call the lessons *pericopes*, (*pear ik o pees*) the Greek equivalent of "clippings".



Today's Gospel - Saint John 6:24-35

✠ SO WHEN THE CROWD SAW THAT NEITHER JESUS NOR HIS disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, **(1) "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. (2) Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."** Then they said to

him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Then Jesus said to them, **(3) “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”** They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, **(4) “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.** [© NRSV]

A Passover Sermon

The time of today's Gospel's events was set for us on the last week. In the Gospel for that day we heard John's Story of the feeding of the 5000. It began with the words found in John 6:⁴: *Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near.* The texts heard last week are vital to our understanding of the entire 6th chapter of Saint John. But further: John tells that much of what was not said in the fields was spoken in the Capernaum Synagogue. Here is the context: Jesus: a famed young rabbi, was visiting. He is known as a miracle worker and healer, a rock star of his age. No doubt the synagogue would have been crowded to the doors, especially with people who had been fed at the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes that had happened on a nearby field. We'd could imagine that the boy whose lunch Christ multiplied was there sitting next to his proud father. His mother would have been seated in the woman's section. Both parents would have been filled with wonder.

As was the custom, Jesus was asked to be guest preacher for a sermon or instruction, or more likely, a series of

teaching sermons delivered during the Passover celebration at the Synagogue.

Now Christ had just fed the multitude. John has preserved some salient points of Christ's sermon(s) numbered (above) as (1), (2), (3) and (4).

- 1) **“Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.**
- 2) **Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”**

The first two comments give the same message, namely, (and crudely), **There is no free lunch.** The message is valid today. We know of a priest who was called by a couple seeking a marriage. He asked if either were Episcopalians. No, they said. He asked why they wished to marry in his church. The couple replied that it was because they had reception reservations at a hotel nearby.

Christ is not the first to experience people who want to be fed without commitment, nor is he the last to meet what are often termed *rice Christians*.

We faithful should also heed the message. If our time, talent and treasure are not pledged to Christ, we, (again crudely), when we go up to Communion, are asking for a free lunch.

Then Jesus says:

- (3) **“Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”**
- (4) **“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.**

The latter comments also give the same message twice. In the Jewish tradition manna and quail and water from the rock¹ are celebrated as a gift of God at the hand of Moses, his

¹ The story is based on well know facts. *Manna* may well be the sugary drippings from certain types of trees. One who has parked a car under a damaged tree in springtime will understand. *Quail* naturally migrate across the Judean desert and can