

St. Boniface

Catholic Church

stboniface.net

230 1st St. NW - Lidgerwood, ND 58053

Also Serving St. Martin of Tours, Geneseo and Sts. Peter & Paul, Cayuga

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saint Boniface

Saturday - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 a.m.

Saint Martin of Tours - Geneseo

Sunday - 10:30 a.m.

Saints Peter & Paul - Cayuga

Sunday - 7:00 p.m.

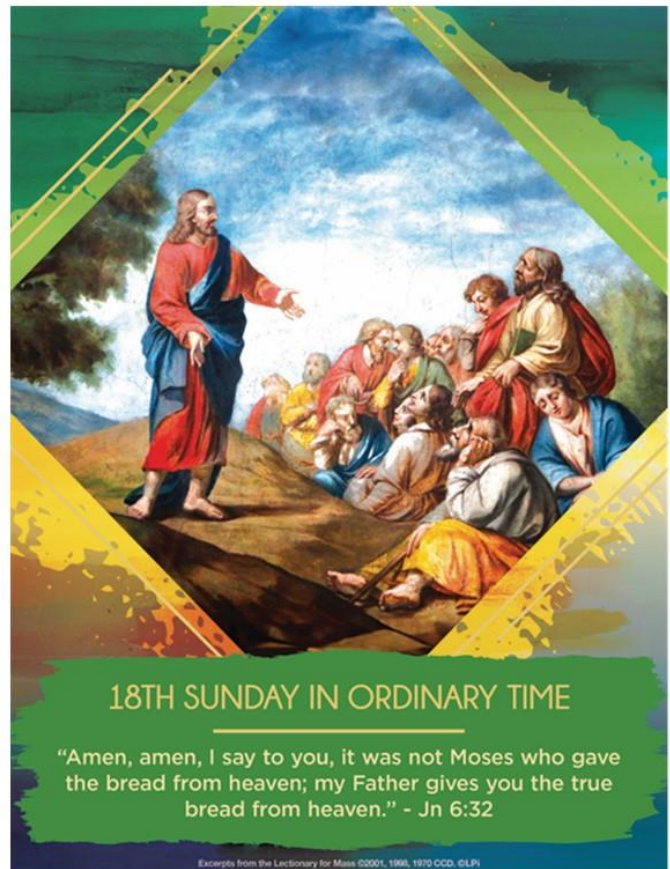
August 4, 2024 - 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Practicing Graciousness in the Desert

Looking back over my journey of parenthood, I know there were days when I traveled the extra mile for my children. I made their toast the way they like it, let them play in the park an extra ten minutes, or let them go to the movies with their friends and I finished up the chores on my own. And then, it happened: the attitude. The request for the smallest thing from one of them is met with disdain or bewilderment.

Sometimes you can be made breathless with the ingratitude of another person who takes so much and with so little shame, only to scoff at the idea that they, too, give even the smallest amount. But if we're being honest with ourselves, we will admit that we do the exact same thing to God. Haven't we all been the Israelites in the desert at one point or another? God has parted our Red Sea in some way. He's led us out of some great trial, given us some great blessings. But then we run into a little resistance somewhere along the way and we throw up our hands. How could you do this to us, Lord? How could you ask this of us? No, I can't go any further. No, I won't do any more.

Persisting in the blindness to the many ways God continues to protect us is nothing short of a temper tantrum. It robs our Everyday Stewardship of its graciousness, of our ability to accept with joy the trials of life because we are also constantly aware of its blessings.



Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15
Ephesians 4:17, 20-24
John 6:24-35

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Weekly Mass Schedule



<u>Sunday Liturgies</u>		
Saturday, August 3	5:00 pm (St. B.)	† Dec. Family of Tony & Frances Oster Family
Sunday, August 4	8:30 am (St. B.)	Pro Popula
	10:30 am (St. M.)	† Jerry Riba
	7:00 pm (Sts. P&P)	Special Intention
<u>Weekday Liturgies</u>		
Monday, August 5	NO MASS	
Tuesday, August 6	NO MASS	
Wed., August 7	NO MASS	
Thursday, August 8	NO MASS	
Friday, August 9	NO MASS	
<u>Sunday Liturgies</u>		
Saturday, August 10	5:00 pm (St. B.)	† Elaine Oster
Sunday, August 11	8:30 am (St. B.)	Shirley Ahrens
	10:30 am (St. M.)	Pro Popula
	7:00 pm (Sts. P&P)	Special Intention

Reconciliation Schedule

St. Boniface: Saturday & Sunday – Before/after Mass
Thursday – after Mass

St. Martin: Sunday – Before and after Mass

Sts. Peter & Paul – Before and after Mass

Prayer Requests

Please keep the following people in your prayers:
 Joan Moerke - Richard Novotny - Doug Spieker
 Steve Listopod - Peggy Harles - Rick Kane
 John Popp - Dan Frolek - Shelby Northrop
 Shirley Ahrens - Brad Meyer - Beth Stroehl
 Nick Podliska - Barb Perry

If you have any imminent prayer requests, please call or text Cindy at 701-640-1401.

All Parishes

Eucharistic Adoration – We are in immediate need for someone to take the 3-4 pm adoration slot. Please contact Sharon at 612-790-1211 or 538-7010 if you are able to help. Adoration is open to all and is Thursdays from 5am to midnight.

Women's Group will meet on Tuesday, August 6 at 7 pm at St. Boniface.

St. Boniface Fall Bazaar will be held on Sunday, Sept. 8 from 11am – 1pm. Please pick up your raffle tickets in the gathering space. We need everyone's help to ensure success. Ladies, please be kind to your circle leaders when they call and be generous with your time, talents and pies!

Redeemed Eucharistic Congress - September 6-7 at the Jamestown Civic Center. This two-day Eucharistic event will serve as the local diocesan launch of the National Eucharistic Revival's Year of Mission. Reserve your place at this event by visiting www.fargodiocese.org/redeemed.

A Message from Bishop John Folda – “The Paris Olympics were stained at the opening ceremony by a scene intended to mock the Last Supper of our Lord and the faith of Christians. This was an offense against Jesus Christ and a sign of gross intolerance toward all who worship him as the Son of God. I invite all my fellow Catholic to offer prayers and sacrifices of reparation to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. And I invite all people of goodwill to make their objections known to those who are responsible for the Olympic Games. I wish the athletes well, but I will not be watching the Olympics this year.

Trust God More Than Sin

In the Sunday readings, the Church's liturgy presents Jesus's own deep dive into the Eucharist. Jesus directly states the theme for today and it's this: “This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.”

This is easier said than done because we are talking about a belief that contradicts what we see. Jesus gives some astonishing reasons to trust him anyway, which we will get to. But the first words Jesus says spell out the dilemma. Crowds have been following him, ecstatic over the multiplication of the loaves. He tells them: “Amen, Amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled.” He warns them, “Do not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” To show just how powerful this warning is, the Church very astutely leads this Sunday with the reading from Exodus about how the Israelites in the desert would rather *die* for food that perishes than trust in God for another moment.

“Would that we had died at the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread!” they say. “But you had to lead us into the desert to make the whole community die of famine.”

These were people who had been greatly blessed, saved from slavery to the Egyptians by the Passover sacrifice, the parting of the Red Sea, and led by a pillar of fire. But now they're hungry and they want to go home, even if home means death. They know what everyone who is attached to sin knows, and that's each one of us. We are all basically addicts who would rather stay close to a false comfort that leads to death than be free and uncomfortable. We would rather trust the sins we are used to than trust God who is good and great and unpredictable.

But God is love, God knows our weakness, and God goes the extra mile. This time, God doesn't tell Moses “How long will this wicked community grumble against me? ... Here in the wilderness your dead bodies shall fall!”

That comes later in the Book of Numbers. It isn't a vindictive warning, it's a statement of fact: Those who reject the Giver of Life choose death.

First, though, God is slow to anger and rich in mercy. He

says, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them: In the evening twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread, so that you may know that I, the Lord, am your God." Then the camp gets pelted with quail and blanketed with manna.

In his book *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*, Brant Pitre uncovers startling parallels between what we believe about the Eucharist and what the Jewish people believed about the supernatural origin and purpose of the manna. He sums up his findings in the title of his fourth chapter: "The Manna of the Messiah."

But the Church gives us a mini-catechesis on the "Jewish Roots of the Eucharist" catechesis in this Sunday's Psalm. Here it is in question-and-answer format:

- *How important is the manna?* Epoch-making; as great as the Passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the pillar of fire, says the Psalm: "What our fathers have declared to us, we will declare to the generations to come; the glorious deeds of the Lord."

- *Where did the manna come from?* It comes from an eternal storehouse held by God outside of time, says the Psalm: "He commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven; he rained manna upon them for food and gave them heavenly bread."

- *What did God's manna bring for those who trusted him?* Salvation. "He brought them to his holy land, to the mountains his right hand had won."

For the Jewish people, the words of this Psalm were part of the fabric of their lives. They knew that God saved them with supernatural bread before, and they expected the Messiah to save them with supernatural bread again.

Moses himself had promised that God would send another prophet like himself.

So Jesus takes them on directly.

Jesus refuses to be in the position of a slave-master doling out small pleasures. He wants our hearts, not our cravings. But now, members of that crowd are asking him if he is something more, if he is the "manna Messiah."

"What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Is he a new Moses ready to re-open heaven's storehouse? Or not?

Jesus gives his answer in straightforward, direct language, and it's the Eucharist. But first consider

what he did before he spoke. Last week's reading ended with John 6, verse 15. This week's begins in John 6, verse 25. In between, astounding things happened. First, after Jesus withdrew, his disciples headed to Capernaum by boat without him. The sea became windy and choppy three miles into the 13-mile trip — but then they saw Jesus walking across the water, saying "It is I;" one of his divine "I am" statements. Then, in an astonishing series of verses we hear that, "they wanted to take him into the boat, but the boat immediately arrived at the shore to which they were headed." And that "The next day, the crowd that remained across the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not gone along with his disciples."

That's why they are astonished at the beginning of this Sunday's Gospel and say, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

So these are the three miracles that happen before today's reading in John, Chapter 6:

- The "multiplication" — actually, the "multi-location" — of the loaves, such that 5,000 people ate the same five barley loaves.

- Jesus "treading on the sea" three miles into their journey.

- Then, Jesus spiriting their boat instantaneously across 10 miles of sea to Capernaum.

Jesus had demonstrated his power to such a high degree that they should have been ready to believe whatever he wanted to tell them. But note how specifically helpful these three miracles are to the Eucharistic belief that bread and wine can be turned into the body and blood of Christ on every altar in the world.

- The miracle of the loaves prepared us to believe that the same Eucharist can be available in many places.

- His walking on water prepared us to believe that the body of Jesus isn't bound by physical laws.

- The miraculous crossing prepared us to believe that Jesus isn't bound by time and space.

So now, when he asks them to believe and they ask for a sign, he has already given them everything they need to accept the full-fledged Eucharist when he says: "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

Because Jesus's command to "believe in the one the Father has sent," has remained his main request for millennia. It is what he asked of an ancient people on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and it is what he asks of us in the 21st century.

We know that St. Paul had a deep Eucharistic faith. He knew that the Eucharistic prayer transforms bread into the body of Christ. Today's reading shows that he also knew that receiving the Eucharist prayerfully transforms Christians into the body of Christ.

We can make his challenge our own:

- First, he says, trust God and let go of your addiction to sin: "No longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; that is not how you learned Christ."

- Next he says, be transformed in Christ: "Be renewed in your mind, and put on the new self, created in God's way."

The same Jesus who was present on the docks of Capernaum was present to St. Paul and the Ephesians and is present in our church this Sunday, and he asks us what he asked them: "Do you trust in me more than you trust in sin?"

"Do you believe that I am the Lord, the great 'I am' who exists outside of time and space? Do you believe that I can be here, in front of you, there in the Holy Land, and everywhere, across the miles and the millennia? "Will you show me you believe in me by trusting? Will you receive me here in Communion and give up the fleshpots, the sins, that hold you back? Will you receive me here in Communion and then take me out into the world with you, where you can be my arms and legs in the world, taking me to those in need; and my ears and mouth, hearing them with me and speaking my words?" That's the question Jesus asks us today. Our work is to believe that he is the one the Father sent, and trust him with our lives. We give him our answer when the priest says, "Body of Christ" and we answer "Amen."