

Pastoral Reflection

17th Sunday OT

Our family recently returned from a two-week long road trip where we were blessed to stop along the way and visit, stay and feast with several different households of family members and friends, many whom we haven't seen for years. It was such a rich blessing to be received with such hospitality and welcome, and relief during our time on the road not to be concerned about food prep (and to be treated to fabulous meals thoughtfully prepared by our hosts!).

This Sunday's readings provide us with reminders of the abundance that is available to us through Jesus when we trust that not only will our needs be met, but they will be met to the full! We are told in the first reading, and then shown in the Gospel, that not only will there be enough for us, but there will be leftovers. It is rare in our household now with two teenage boys and a budding tween to have leftover food at the end of a meal. What I am noticing as our boys have gotten older is that although their food consumption doesn't leave room for leftovers anymore, the impact of us all sitting down for a meal together most nights for all these years definitely has a "leftover" impact in terms of our relationships, the conversations we're able to share with each other and the creation of something deeper than simply the sharing of food.

And so it is with Jesus, and the Eucharist and those times in our lives when we're gathering with friends or family or as a community to share in feeding each other with food and with our lives; we are being told in today's Gospel that the daily bread we seek will be multiplied and we will forever be able to feast when we remember the source of our sustenance. The feast Jesus prepares is a feast for body and spirit, and the impact of us welcoming and receiving this feast in our lives has the potential to fill us to overflowing. There is an open invitation to us to feed and to be fed - let us strive to be hosts, and to also partake in the banquet that Jesus offers to us in the Eucharist and in the everyday meals and moments in our lives - and to enjoy the leftovers.