

2 Samuel 18: 5-9, 15, 31-33
Psalm 130
Ephesians 4:25-5:2
John 6: 41-51

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

+ + +

“You are what you eat,” or so the old saying goes.
Organic food proponents from the 1970s aside, and even those today,
the phrase originated in the early 1800s -
from both a Frenchman and a German.
It came into English usage by Victor Lindlar
who, in the 1920s and 30s, advocated the Catabolic Diet,
still popular today by various other names.
Lindlar proclaimed:
"Ninety per cent of the diseases known to man are caused by cheap food stuffs. You
are what you eat."
And this way long before Fritos and Beer Nuts,
and super-sizing ourselves at fast-food “Stufferies.”
Fast-food.
You are what you eat.
So, slow down,
and chew on this ‘food for thought’ for a few minutes.
The past couple of Sundays there were those 5,000 who sat at Jesus’ feet
fed with loaves abounding, and fish multiplying,
and now they chased after Jesus - for what - to complain?
They ate what the advertisements sold them: stale bread and rotten fish,
not the Living Bread Jesus offers.
They were conned into wanting the cheap, the fast and un-nutritious.
Instead, Jesus offers us a healthy diet - one for eternal glory,
while all we want, like those 5,000, is immediate gratification,
spiritual fast food - deep-fired and sugar-coated - junk food.
You are spiritually as well, what you eat.

So, I’m going to play my Anglo-Catholic priestly card once again -
a warning for any Evangelicals in the midst.
By the Anglo - I mean the Incarnational nature of our theology,
and by the Catholic, I speak of the mystery of the Eucharist.
Jesus is the bread which came down from heaven.
He takes the bread, himself,
offers it, himself, up in a prayer of thanksgiving,
breaks it, himself,
and hands himself to either side of the Table at the Last Supper.
“This is my Body. Broken for you.”

Lutheran Bishop Stephen Bouman tells of standing behind an altar in a small crypt chapel of the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth in the Holy Land, the place where Mary heard that she was going to have a baby. He saw some Latin words carved into the altar, *Verbum caro factum est*, “The Word was made flesh.” But then he noticed that there was one other little word in Latin. That word: h–i–c. Hic. “Here.” *Verbum caro hic factum est*. “The Word was made flesh here.”

Probably whoever authorized that inscription meant it to refer to that specific location, but in reality the Incarnation means God became flesh here on earth, for all of us. The Incarnation means that we can speak of the “hic-ness” of God, the nearness of God. Incarnation means that God walks with us on earth, and that if we are saved anywhere, it is right here on earth.

from *Proclaim*, August 2012

The Anglo-catholic in me takes that “*verbum caro hic factus est*”
as both Incarnational and sacramentally Immanent.
Jesus is offered as flesh and blood right here in our celebration
of Holy Communion, each and every time we come together.
Hic (“here” in Latin) becomes *Haec* (“this”),
thus, “Here is Word made flesh” is now, here today,
“This is the Word made manifest.”

Every priest must come to grips with the reality that
it is difficult for probably 99½ percent of people in the pews
to accept that Jesus is God come down from heaven to live with us.
It’s a nice concept; we state it every week in our Confession of Faith,
and celebrate it at Christmas, along with the fruitcake and eggnog.
But do we really grasp the idea and live into the truth of God-Made-Flesh?
Sure, a bishop can stand in Nazareth and see words which jump out at him,
like some Indiana Jones movie sacred inscription glowing in light.
And I can stand up there behind the Altar and say the sacred words
and feel within myself something special happening each time I do. But does that communicate
down here to pew-level.

Communicate, from the root to commune, to share.
What is it we are sharing?
What is being offered in Christ’s proclaiming that he is the Bread of Life?

The pragmatist would, like those early thousands, say, “Well,
He is talking about how he will offer his life symbolically to save others.”
And their food will last for a short period.
Jesus is not talking here about self-sacrifice,
though that may have been the first-century understanding.
Yet, “on this side of Easter” we assume a new reality.
Jesus is offering us the sustaining nourishment in each week’s celebration -
anamnesis in Greek, - a living, active participation in -
God’s incarnate life here on earth and eternally vibrant in heaven.

+ 3 +

For Jesus is both here and now, *and* then and there,
in a mysterious mix of quantum spirituality.
OK, I admit, quantum spirituality may be heavy fare for the end of summer
when all we want is fried chicken and watermelon -
or this week, maybe hot sausage sandwiches and funnel cake -
the County Fair concluding as we speak - talk about un-healthy food!

Thomas Cramner proposed an Anglican understanding of the Sacraments, and crafted these words
in 1549,

still found in our Book of Common Prayer,
and even in our newer Eucharistic Prayers,
the theology remains:

*We offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and
living sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee that we, and all others who shall be partakers of this
Holy Communion, may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, be
filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with him, that he may dwell in us,
and we in him.*

Eucharistic Payer I, BCP p.336

That Christ through the Eucharist of Bread and Wine
becomes one with me, and I become one with Christ.

For we are, after all, that which we eat.
Filled with God's Divine Grace and Holy Blessing,
we are made one body with Christ,
so that Christ may dwell in us,
and we in Christ.

Christ here and now, and we then and there.
Christ lives right here,
and in this sacrament we enter into eternal life.

Now, that is food for thought!
For thought,
for prayerful contemplation,
and most especially food for faith-filled rejoicing.

Let me remind you of those familiar words Jesus speaks today:

"This bread which comes down from heaven is that one may eat of it and not die. I am
that living bread come down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I am my body."

John 6:50-51, adapted

Thus, let us eat of this bread, and drink of this cup,
and become one with Christ,
that God may dwell in us, and we may dwell forever in God.

And let us truly be what we eat -
good and healthy food, for this life, and for the world to come:
the Body of Christ
the Bread of Heaven.

AMEN.

CHILDREN'S SERMON - Flat Bread and Yeast.

A loaf a bread baked without yeast, and the same recipe with yeast.

I've got two loaves of bread here, I thought we might use for Communion today, instead of our usual communion wafers. Since Jesus talks about bread, and living bread.

Look at these two loaves. Something's different about them. What do you notice? (*One's flat, the other one's big and soft. One's hard.*)

Let's crack them open and see what they look like inside.

This one has bubble holes in it; do you know what that comes from?

Yeast! Right.

The flat one didn't have any yeast put in it. Someone forgot.

So which one do you think we should use? Which would you rather put peanut butter on and make a sandwich for lunch?

People's faith is often like these two loaves of bread.

Some people take communion and it's just a flat piece of wafer.

Others feel Jesus and the Holy Spirit livening them, leavening like yeast, filling them up and making them, well, fluffy.

Full of God's presence. Like yeast. Raising them, filling them.

Let's pray that God's Spirit fills us up and makes us light and gives us life.

From flat bread to a risen loaf.