

Greetings,

As we continue through the Winter months, and no doubt tend to hunker down, our August Discover Jesus theme is – Jesus the Bread of Life (which is present in the August Gospel readings which come from the Gospel of John – a departure from this year's Gospel of Mark). The image of Bread conjures up the sense of what is essential for our 'feeding' – the basic necessity. Jesus pushes this imagery in relation to himself, and by implication foreshadows the sacramental bread of the Eucharist. Naturally Bread and Life go together, and we are also challenged to reflect upon Life – in the gospels in August, Jesus uses ζ wń (zoe) as the word for life; this is different from β (bios) or biological life/day-to-day life in ordinary. ζ wń life is life lived beyond the mere 'just being physically alive' – it is the fullness of life which belongs to God. For us humans, it is life lived infused by the spiritual and lived in relationship with the God-Man Jesus, who came to bring LIFE. Significantly, these dialogues to do with the Break of Life and of 'eating' or consuming Jesus mean there are some who fall away from following (see the Gospel for 26th August). There is a sub-theme of the difficulty of following Jesus and acknowledging there are those for whom he will never make sense!

Life, be in it! is a 'secular' theme which one still sees around to do with living life to the full – i.e. both physically and emotionally in our engagements and interactions. Although not having its origins within the circle of faith, the emphasis does remind us that when we are participating in the 'life of God/life of Christ' we are not only engaged with the divine in some sort of selfish introspective manner, but rather we are engaged with fellow believers as well as those who have not experienced the life of faith, and that engagement can take a variety of ways in terms of responding to people (and believe it or not, this doesn't mean we have to speak God-language at them all of the time!).

What are activities we could engage in as the Christian People of God, which enable our reflection upon this month's theme? Bread seems to be the prevailing possibility, given the Gospel readings and Jesus' reference to himself as the 'bread of life.' Perhaps it is an opportunity to celebrate bread in its many and varied forms, especially if you have access to

a bakery or supermarket with all sorts of bread? (And don't forget the various 'flat' breads such as pita bread, roti, etc.) The reflection which can come from this will not only relate to our personal enjoyment of bread and the variety of options and flavours, but a reminder of bread as a core and basic food — especially in less developed countries. The reflection might then move onto how physical bread, and its supporting of life can point to other aspects of life which need feeding and which are more than just the physical. I.e. who or what 'feeds' us spiritually at the most basic and essential level?

Jasamine, one of our task group members, has suggested trying some bread-making or have a Bread Bake-Off? (Bread making still being part of the essential activity of the day in many households in other parts of the world.) There are also different varieties of bread you could include – Pumpkin, Zucchini, Potato, Banana, Cheesy, Damper, etc. You could also combine with having a meal of fish stew or bouillabaisse, reminiscent of Jesus feeding the 5000. (And don't forget the wine!) Some recipes to try are attached.

Ruth Daws has again provided some activities for *The Young and Young at Heart*. These can be used as Sunday activities with children or even given to families with children to do at home.

NB – with any bread exercises/reflections, please be mindful of those for whom wheat bread causes allergies! Try exploring/finding substitutes?

Some points of reflection:

You cannot claim to worship Jesus in the Tabernacle if you do not pity Jesus in the slum.
- Bp Frank Weston, Bp of Zanzibar

(http://anglicaneucharistictheology.com/Anglican Eucharistic Theology/Case Studies/Entri-es/2006/1/27 Frank Weston1871-1924Bishop of Zanzibar.html)

In Holy Communion we have Christ under the appearance of bread. In our work we find him under the appearance of flesh and blood. It is the same Christ. "I was hungry, I was naked, I was sick, I was homeless."

-Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection on the Eucharist & Communion; reflection on life and LIFE; a reflection on how we are/can be fed by Jesus - http://liturgy.co.nz/i-am-the-bread-of-life

A blog reflecting on the Sunday Gospels: - material reflecting on John 6:51-58 - http://leftbehindandlovingit.blogspot.com/2012/08/from-bread-of-heaven-to-gnawing-on-flesh 14.html

Some Post Communion Prayers suitable for the August Gospels:

God of mercy, pour forth upon us the Spirit of your love, that we who have been nourished by the one bread from heaven maybe one in mind and heart. Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Merciful God, you have invited us to share in the one bread and the one cup. Enable us to live as one in Christ and to labour gladly for the salvation of all. Grant this in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Merciful Lord,
we have feasted at your banquet of salvation.
Through this sacrament,
which nourishes our lives on earth,
make us sharers in eternal life.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Having feasted with delight at your heavenly table, we beg you, Lord, that we may always hunger for that food by which we truly live.

Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Festivals:

The month of August has a number of significant Feasts (while none occur on a Sunday, for churches with the opportunity to observe a Feast of Title or Patronal, liturgical resources will be sent in the next few days): 6th August, **The Transfiguration of the Lord**; 15th August, **St. Mary, Mother of the Lord**; 24th August, **St. Bartholomew**; 29th August, **The Beheading of St. John the Baptist**. It is worth nothing that 15th August, THE feast day commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary is now common to all Anglican Calendars (25th March, Annunciation or 'Lady Day,' is properly a celebration of the Lord rather than the BVM, despite popular Anglican usage). For those a bit jittery about Marian observances, the book by the Anglican evangelical priest, John de Satge, *Mary and the Christian Gospel*, can be a helpful entree. It is also well worth having a look at the ARCIC document *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*. (Online version: http://www.vatican.va/roman curia/pontifical councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc pc chrstuni doc 20050516 mary-grace-hope-christ en.html

And to conclude, a quote from Irenaeus of Lyons:

Gloria enim Dei vivens homo, vita autem hominis visio Dei.
For the glory of God is the living man, and the life of man is the vision of God.
(Often misquoted as "The glory of God is man fully alive")
Book 4, Chapter 34, Section 7. **Against Heresies**, **Saint Irenaeus**

The Task Group is always hoping to hear of your activities, and indeed, ideas which can be shared with others. Looking ahead, September will offer the opportunity of two themes; Jesus the Healer (related to the Gospel readings) and if you are interested in exploring 'Creation-tide' – Jesus, the Fount of Creation.

With every prayer and blessing,

DP

Fr David Patterson (Chair of Diocesan Task Group)