



DAY FOR LIFE

2011

Liturgical Materials: Homily Notes

31 JULY 2011, 18TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Today the Church calls us to focus on the value of human life.

On this Day for Life the word of God directs us toward true happiness and where the fulfilment of our desires is to be found.

In the Gospel it is the end of a long day and all the crowds who have been listening to Jesus are hungry.

The disciples do what any of us would do. They decide to send the crowds away to buy food.

Jesus has another answer he takes the fives loaves and the two fish and he feeds the people. He shows them the great abundance that God shares with us. "They all ate as much as they wanted."

As today's psalm says:

"You open wide you hands, O Lord, you grant the desires of all who live."

Over and over again in the Gospels the same thing happens. There is a lack of something and the disciples go and buy what is needed.

Whenever the disciples are buying something Jesus uses the occasion to teach us about the abundance of God.

Remember the story of the Samaritan woman. Jesus meets the woman at the well and when she asks him for a drink he tells her "I am the living water whoever drinks the water that I will give will never be thirsty again".

Where were the disciples? "They had gone into the town to buy food." They had left behind the one who is the bread of life, the living water.

The act of buying in the Gospels is almost always used to teach us about what is freely offered by God.

God has given us a creation rich in resources a world teeming with life.

Our difficulty is that our culture tells us that God's generosity is going to run out. That tomorrow we will not have enough and so we have to hoard, to take more than our fair share.

Our society teaches us that if we buy the right things, have enough money in the bank, then our desires will be fulfilled and happiness will be ours.

In other words we are like the first disciples of Christ. The answer is to go and buy.

The advertising that surrounds us is not just selling us products but a way of life, the fulfilment of our desires.

In the midst of the present recession the Gospel re-orientates us. It teaches us that it is trust in God that will fulfil our desires.

When we learn that the riches of life cannot be hoarded, or stored then the whole of our attitude to human life is transformed.

When we realise that life is a gift to be received not a problem to be solved, then our approach to the poor, to care of the elderly, to those in the womb is radically changed.

The Prophet Isaiah in the first reading tells us very simply what we have to do to find true happiness and the fulfilment of our desires.

We have simply to listen to the Lord and put our faith in his promise.

“Listen, listen to me and you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy. Pay attention, come to me; listen, and your soul will live.”

Fr Michael McAndrew

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