

Impact

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.



Taste and see the goodness of the Lord

Impact this Month

At Sunday Mass this month, we sing Psalm 34 with its refrain, "Taste and see the goodness of the Lord."

We see and experience the Lord's goodness each and every day - in the love of family and friends; the beauty of creation; the kindness of strangers; the unexpected and unearned moments of grace; the recognition of our gifts and talents; the feeling of closeness in serving others; and in a very special way, in receiving Holy Communion.

Reflect on this throughout the coming weeks. In what ways do you see and experience the goodness of the Lord?

We can imagine how perplexed the disciples were. They had journeyed with Jesus, saw the healings and heard him teaching. They witnessed miraculous events at Jesus' hands and when they reached out in Jesus' name. They understood the confusion of the crowds but could not imagine leaving Jesus. They may have talked among themselves, but now was the moment to declare their growing faith: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life."

How is it possible that the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood? How can we, unworthy though we are, receive this precious gift? How can we possibly respond in gratitude for such an incredible blessing?

Those who remained with Jesus did not allow themselves to stumble on the incredible mystery of God's love they experienced in Jesus, but rather risked putting their faith in him. Even though they did not understand, they reflected on what they saw and heard, the

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger and whoever believes in me will never thirst.

"I am the bread of life," Jesus said to those who sought him after the multiplication of loaves and fish. "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." In many ways, Jesus' words are as confounding now as then. The crowd was not sure what to make of it all. Some left. Others were filled with awe.

Like the disciples who gathered on the hillside, we, too, may be confounded by the Lord. Every time we participate in the Eucharist, we hear the Lord's voice in the proclamation of the readings and the homily. We come face to face with the glory of God in the simple elements of bread and wine; Christ, the bread of life, is given to us as food for the journey, nourishment for the life of discipleship.

moments of forgiveness, healing, and love, and trusted that their experience was real and true. They became convinced that Jesus is the Holy One of God.

We can learn from the disciples and do likewise. We can reflect on what we hear and experience in the liturgy and the goodness that surrounds us, and put our faith in Christ, the Holy One of God, who gives himself for the life of the world. We can commit ourselves to become more deeply the people the Lord desires, Christ's Body here and now, and offer ourselves in humble service and compassion. The disciples were forever changed in that moment on the mountain when they stayed with Jesus. Let us likewise be transformed by the mystery of Christ, the bread of life.

Make a choice. Serve the Lord.

The disciples made a choice to remain with Jesus when others returned to their previous way of life. Joshua gathered the people together to renew their covenant with the Lord, asking them to declare their commitment to serve God rather than the idols of the nations that surrounded them. Joshua stated, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Jos 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b)

We, too, are called to declare and live our faith in God, boldly renouncing the idols that lure us away from God and God's ways and living abundantly in the Lord. Like the people whom Joshua gathered, we too have a choice to make, once and for all and each and every day. Our daily decisions will bear out this great choice for Christ, knowing that the Lord will always be with us, strengthening us and offering us mercy when we fail.

Any time we think about our food sources, especially at this time of growing and harvest in North America, we have a beautiful analogy for abundance. What we put into our soil is what we see in our fruit. If we tend the soil of our lives with God's word, humility, love and attentiveness, our roots, stems and leaves will stay strong when the storms of life roll through. Furthermore, abundance is not always quantity, but quality. When a crop is well-rotated and soil is well-fertilized, its fruit will be sweet if not always plentiful. When we place our trust in the Lord our fruits are not always more time or more energy, but more patience and deeper understanding.

The people whom Joshua gathered had experienced the abundance of the Lord, from their escape from slavery in Egypt, water that flowed from the rock, manna that gave them daily nourishment, and entry into the promised land. In seeing the hand of God in the circumstances of their lives, they responded by putting their faith in the One whose goodness they had known, "Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

"Forsake foolishness that you may live; advance in the way of understanding," we hear from the book of Proverbs. Be rooted in Christ, the bread of life, who calls us to bring life to the world. See God's hand in the goodness that surrounds you. Let this recognition grow within you, draw you to the One who provides it, and respond by sharing and serving others with glad and generous hearts. Make a choice. Serve the Lord.



Bring faith to life. Donna had been invited dozens of times to help with her parish's soup kitchen. It was not lack of time or appreciation of the need for the kitchen that stopped Donna. It was fear, outright and simple. She was afraid she would not know what to say; afraid of what someone might say to her; and most of all, afraid that she would be overwhelmed.

Donna knew in her heart that once she served meals, she would not be the same. Her time and all of the inconsequential things she did with it would be measured by the number of minutes she gave to others. Her resources would seem plentiful in comparison with those who came to receive a meal from the people at the parish. Donna also knew that this is exactly what she needs to do. She cannot ignore the pull on her heart every time the request for help is made.

Finally a good friend called and said, "I know you really want to come and so do some of our friends. I will pick you up and we will serve together." Donna said a brief prayer for strength and accepted the invitation. Christ's call is often gentle, no more than a tug at the heart, and Donna is now certain she can conquer her fear through faith and the strength of her friends at her side.