

Homily: April 19, 2021

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We often chose things or ways that are not life-giving or loving, and so we call upon our compassionate God.

Jesus just told us, “Work for food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” Then he added, “The work of God is that you believe in the one he sent.”

What might “believe in the one he sent” mean? I am sure there are many aspects. This is what came to me. I believe that Jesus is **sent** by God, meaning, he is the **incarnated** one of God, to make God real—to make love real—to make love the essential food for our life.

The first and foremost Jesus-food is forgiveness—especially the aspect of accepting us as both **beloved** people and, simultaneously, **limited as human beings**. Therefore we tend to **make ourselves** more than we are, just like Adam and Eve did from the beginning. We don’t want to accept our limitations and weaknesses. That’s why we human beings tend towards presenting a **false** and inflated self, which prompts us to be **self-centered**. THE GOOD NEWS IS—Jesus came as someone who was other-centered and very humble PLUS COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL with us who seek self-glory, wear masks and become so afraid of what others think of us.

Therefore, a really good prayer for us human beings is one we just heard the Psalmist express in the responsorial psalm: “Remove from me the way of falsehood and favor me with your law [of love].”

That prayer reminded me of a true story I read many years ago about Oliver Cromwell, who served as Lord Protector and a military general of England in the 1650s. He asked Mr. Lely, the artist to touch up the original “nice” portrait, “I desire you would use all your skill to redo my picture truly like me, and flatter me not at all; but remake all the roughness, pimples, warts, and everything as you see me, otherwise I will never pay a farthing (penny) for it.” Cromwell didn’t want any type of what we now call photo-shopping or plastic surgery to make him look nicer. He wanted “warts and all.”

No wonder that he also once said, “I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken.”

That was Cromwell’s way of eating the eternal food of Christ, by endeavoring to be humble and accept his self as he was. I hope you and I can eat the eternal food of Jesus, who came to serve humbly, known not to seek status, not to get whatever he could get, but rather to give himself totally.

As Jesus said, “**Work for food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.**”