

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost VII Come to the Santa Mesa in Galilee

There is a place called Santa Mesa, “Holy Table,” near Lake Galilee. It marks the Feeding of the Five Thousand. “Taking the five loaves and two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds and all ate and were filled.” We are told about Jesus blessing and breaking the flat loaves but the breaking up of the fish is not mentioned. It is the taking and blessing and breaking and giving pattern that will occur at the Last Supper and it is the pattern that re-emerges in our liturgies. It is also true to life in that much of what we do in life involves being taken from the womb and being both blessed and broken on our journey so that we can offer to others all the gifts which have been invested in our personhood.

Behind every story there is a **motivation** and an **intention** and the need for **discernment**. The story here tells us about the way in which we are sustained through our life. It is rightly seen through the analogy of the **manna** in the wilderness in the Fourth Gospel. It looks back to the Exodus story where food came from heaven for the pilgrims of Israel who were finding their way home on a long journey. Here it provides food for people away from home, so the intention is to help us to see the providence of God in every circumstance. It also placards Jesus at the centre of the story. The intention is to show us that he is able to call upon the resources of God to transform something in his hands into an amount of food that feeds five thousand, six thousand or even seven thousand people if we include the women and children. The intention is also to show us that we can depend upon the daily providence of God in our lives. These people are hungry late in the day and it is difficult to find a place to get their provisions. They may have brought food with them but they need sustenance at this point right now. There is something frightening in being hungry, as we see at the moment in the drought-affected areas in Africa, with huge needs and the suffering of humanity and creatures of the land. The tormented faces of the children haunt us. No soft answers will do before such intense suffering. The universe around us is so self-supporting that we fail to recognise that it is also very fragile. Just a degree of temperature here or there or a misalignment of something can create havoc. It is likely that the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand near Lake Galilee is told in all four Gospels with the intention of allowing us to enter the creative activity of God. We are called to enjoy the stream of providential grace streaming from the heart of God. God as Creator is near in this story. It is rightly described as a “nature miracle.”

When it comes to **discernment** we look first for points of interest in this story. It is a story that has a definite action in it of taking and blessing, breaking and giving. This reappears as we have observed in Christian liturgies. This pattern is also true to life. We do not choose the hour of our birth and we do not choose the hour of our death unless we take our own life. We are dependent upon so much from the moment we are born. We are incredibly fragile when we are born because of our incapacity to sustain ourselves in any way. The tiny blob that starts the life of a baby kangaroo emerges from the mother and has to crawl up the outside of the pouch and get into it and fasten onto a teat to sustain its life. The human child can perform no such miracle of survival. The discernment here is to see the Christ himself acting in a compassionate way and his practical care for the people. It also shows his enormous trust in God. Come to the table and meet the one waiting to greet us!

Bishop Arthur Jones

TO PLAN:

August 2, Tuesday.

- Bible Study, 10am
- Discussion, 7:30pm-9:00pm,
Parish Hall: Looking at
Christian issues today-outside
and inside the church

August 4, Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am,
Chapel

NEXT SUNDAY' READINGS:

Jonah 2:1-9; Psalm 29; Romans
9:1-5; Matthew 14:22-33