

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost XI Voices Resounding Near a Lake in Galilee

The scriptures are the distilled voices in literary expression of the experiences of humanity. The Christian Gospels in particular distil the experiences, teaching and self-interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth, the universal human. Open the pages of Gospels and you will find him looking at you. The Gospel is plurivocal, not only in its four main voices of interpretation called Mark, Mathew, Luke and John. The Person at the centre of every page invites us to join them with him. Somewhere in the crowd we may see ourselves dressed in a linen robe. Not likely, you say! Jesus delighted in being the host of meals.

What we call Chapter 6 of John's Gospel is the longest interpretation of a miracle-meal in the Gospels. We could read it for a lifetime and never get to the bottom of it. It uses information known in the sketched material and traditions in the other Gospels about Jesus feeding approximately 7000 men women and children. This was by the Sea of Galilee late one evening as darkness encroached. The writer knows about the basic story and incorporates in particular an interpretation based on the feeding of Israel with Manna in the wilderness when they were famished.

The context of the meal is fear and need and uncertainty.

One ancient tradition lists twelve basic fears in humanity. The meal at the Lake has several of them.

The Fear of the Unknown

This fear is symbolized by the oncoming darkness of night in the story. We began life in the secure world of our mother's womb. But even there we were affected by our mother's worries and tensions. This gave birth to our most powerful fear, that of not being at peace in ourselves. This goes with the fear of not being truly oneself.

The people in Galilee were in a familiar place, but Jesus was charting a course that was both consoling and unsettling for them. What was going to happen to them in Israel if they continued to follow the prophet Jesus from Nazareth?

The Fear of Hunger and Need

There were many people in Jesus' day and right now whose present needs obliterate anything but the present moment. Whether there will be a next meal blots out most other things. Needs, both real and unreal, can consume us and makes us afraid. An excess of needs can also consume us.

The Fear of Death and Dying

The fragility of our life comes to the fore when we are in the presence of the unknown. Deep needs, whether physical, mental, spiritual, or emotional may blindside us so that we cannot see our usual pictures of reality. Life is transitory and uncertain and we know it. Suppressing fear does not work. It revives and attacks afresh, stronger than ever. Fighting fear, a current method, leads it to retreat and ambush us at the next opportunity. Again, it is more damaging than before. **Jesus offers us many opportunities to enter the fear itself to find the seeds of assurance to guide us out of it. “The greatest benefit of fear is that when you understand it, you know that you can heal it” (Christopher Hansard).**

Conclusion

Jesus calls for complete trust in him. The glory of God is attached to creation. This is why Jesus calls himself The Bread of Life, since the glory of God in him connects with the glory of the Father to feed the multitude at the lakeside. He assures them that he will raise them up on the Last Day. This is, resurrection through him in a personal sense, resurrection out of fear and need and death. It is practical, spiritual and life-changing. He leads them through their fears and out of them in their daily life and into the unknown that he makes known.
Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday.

- Bible study, 10:00am.
- Group Discussion, 7:00pm, Parish Office

Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Proverbs 9:1-6; Psalm 147; Ephesians 5:15-20; John 6:53-59
