

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I prepare for my annual vacation, I want to profoundly assure you of my prayers and at the same time ask for your fervent prayers for my safekeeping. A very special tribute to all of you wonderful parishioners of St. Joseph the Worker for your heartfelt wishes and donations towards our orphanage in Nigeria. Know they are genuinely appreciated.

In continuing the thread from last weekend, after Jesus fed the multitude, St. John begins what scripture scholars call the Eucharistic discourse. Today's readings challenge us to trust in the providence of a loving and caring God and to hunger and thirst for the bread of eternal life – the Holy Eucharist.

Our First Reading demonstrates how God shows an unrelenting love that satisfies the ravenous, bottomless hunger of His chosen and tough people! We never tire of hearing how our Father in Heaven provided these hungry souls in the desert with the manna and quail. In the Second Reading, St. Paul advises the early Ephesians that they need to turn away from their former worldly selves and as in their baptism, *'put on the new self'* as a renewal in the spirit.

In the Gospel, Jesus begins the Bread of Life discourse with His unique and bold claim: *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."* Jesus indeed offers the crowd physical bread but at the same time offers Himself as that eternal and lasting food from Heaven, the very sacrifice that would bring salvation to completion. Many were happy with the physical food, but far too few could embrace the challenges that come from the commitment to receive the spiritual bread. We are aware that many abandoned Him over this.

We all deeply need to feed ourselves with daily spiritual nourishment, reading, reciting, and praying. In the Holy Mass, the Church offers us two remedies for nourishment: The Bread of Life contained in the liturgy of the Word that comes from the mouth of God, and the Bread of Life quietly and mysteriously contained in the Holy Eucharist. Let us nourish our souls with this heavenly manna and carry Jesus into our homes and workplaces, glorifying His love, mercy, and compassion all around us, and in many little ways, giving ourselves over to the needs of our brothers and sisters.

In honoring God's gifts of spiritual life and strength, we can properly prepare to receive the Most Holy Eucharist. Observing a fast before receiving, maintaining modesty in our dress and gestures, and a thoughtful examination of conscience all keep us faithful to this sacrament. Through Holy Communion, our Catechism teaches how partaking *'preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism.'* This was a moment from all of our lives when we first became united with Christ, and do we not all burn with fire in our hearts to recover that?

— Joyous Sunday!