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| 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time |
| Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15 |
| Ephesians 4:17, 20-24 |
| John 6:24-35 |

**A. Text/Context**

* The setting of our gospel today brings us to the events after Jesus multiplied the bread and a multitude of 5 thousand people were relieved of their hunger
* And now with Jesus doing miracles multiplying bread by hundreds of thousands to feed hungry people, it becomes a problem
* People would trail him wherever he goes perhaps to get a good share again of the bonanza of eating for free and they also mixed with the faithful followers of his teachings
* So people were looking for him and even followed him by boat to reach the other side of the lake of Tiberias
* Jesus understands the situation of the people and he makes use of this situation to evangelize the hungry people
* What did he say to the people? “Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs *(the sign of the bread)* but because you ate the loaves and were filled.”
* It is understandable that the crowd of people following Jesus especially the poor are all there for the free meals
* Jesus understood their situation very well but Jesus wants them to give more purpose to their intentions that goes beyond the satisfaction of eating a physical bread
* And so he said: Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life which the Son of Man will give you
* And so the people asked: Sir give us this bread always and Jesus said and finally revealed to the people
* I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst
* The true giver is not Moses, but the Father; the true giving was not in the past, but in the present
* The true bread was not the manna, as mentioned in Exodus in the first reading but the bread of God that has now come down from Heaven in the person of Jesus
* And so out of human weakness’ the people asked: Sir give us this bread always
* Because the understanding of the people is that if they will eat the physical bread that Jesus is telling them it will fill their stomach and they will never be hungry forever which is of course a wrong understanding
* If they have properly heard Jesus' words would have prompted them towards faith in the Lord, not the satisfaction of the physical bread
* They have wrongly associated Jesus with Moses, rather than associating Jesus with the bread from Heaven

**B. Human Situation**

* The gospel today brings us to a situation of a transition; from satisfying first the pangs of hunger which is the multiplication of the bread that has just occurred
* Then to a transition of a real bread from heaven which is now in its spiritual and that is now the faith in Jesus that will sustain them forever
* So we are now given a reality that we need to balance the existence of what is material and what is spiritual. So how do we strike a balance?
* We know that it is a commandment that we keep Sunday holy, so it is obligatory because God has commanded so. Just give me one day in a week and honor me. Not even one day just one hour in a week
* For example the husband works in the Middle East and he is a good Catholic and who does not want to miss his Sunday mass
* But because of the nature of his work, the culture of a Muslim country and there is no church there so he cannot attend mass and he feels guilty about it
* Or the wife who wants to complete her novena mass but she cannot join the mass because her sick child is very sick and she feels guilty missing the novena mass
* Both of them should not feel guilty for not attending mass because the intention of the father is to work, to support for the family
* The intention of the mother is to care of the sick child whom nobody takes over
* What we look as so worldly but essential and so material but necessary is really something very spiritual
* Do you think God will be mad because they fail to do the duties they are obliged to do? No
* But certainly God will not be happy if the husband has the time and there is a church in his workplace and he did not attend Sunday mass
* God will not be happy if the mother has all the time and choses to remain at home just to watch her favorite TV program

**C. Challenge**

* The readings today tell us of the things of heaven and the things of the world and we are challenged to strike a balance between the two
* We need to work in order to meet our material needs and at the same time as we do our work, our ordinary duties in the family, in the offices and companies and in our business, we need to be properly motivated with our good intentions for doing the work and we will have a balance
* Doing good work is already the food that does not perish that will nourish our spirit
* The good intentions that we have in doing business, helping others, doing our duties daily is already the spiritual food that we need
* Even if we are very busy, no person cannot be really so busy that he or she cannot even recite a single line of prayer for the day
* So you see, God knows our intentions and so he understands everything
* We offer our daily work our daily obligations as prayer if we are really very busy. A person who finds God in his work even in the tight schedule still remains calm
* This is what St. Paul said in the 2nd reading to the Christians of Ephesus
* We need to put on the new self that God has given us putting away all the old self and the former way of life
* Even if we are busy, this would not stop us to do the commandments and the teachings of the Lord
* We strike a balance that the work that we do is both a food for the material body and the food for the spiritual soul
* If we exercise the right intentions in every duty that we do, we already sanctify that action and we already made it holy