

**20th Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 16, 2015**

**“I am the living bread that came down from heaven;
whoever eats this bread will live forever.”**

*There are those who are content simply to wait for this bread.
I'm not one of them.*

As you may have noticed, I have been gone for a while. I was on vacation at my niece's cabin on Priest Lake in North Idaho. It was a wonderful time for me, better than good. What made it especially so, even though I was there by myself, was that I had the experience of not being alone, of being in the presence of an “Other,” a Source, an Inviter - one into whose presence I was being invited. It was powerful. It didn't matter what I did or when I did it. It didn't even matter that it didn't matter. All I knew that there was an “Other” with me, and that that was all that mattered. This wasn't a vacation from last year, it was a moving into the present.

Franciscan Father Richard Rohr puts words around this experience: *“Call it destiny, providence, guidance, synchronicity, or coincidence if you will, but people who are connected to the Source do not need to steer their own life and agenda. They know that it is being done for them in a much better way than they ever could. Those who hand themselves over are well received, and then the flow happens through them, with them, and in them.”*

A question for you

Have you ever have this experience of being in the presence of an “Other,” of being carried, of being cared for? I am inviting you to reflect back on this in your lives. This experience I am describing is not unusual, it is happening all the time. We may call it luck, we may call it serendipity, we may call it coincidence, but on a deeper level, we recognize this experience to be a communication from beyond us, and such is happening all the time. It's just that we don't recognize it when it happens.

So again, I am inviting you to consider this question: can you recall a time in your life when you felt you were in the presence of an “Other,” a Source, an Inviter - one into whose presence you were being invited?

Congregation Sharing

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever.” What does this bread look like? Again, Fr. Rohr: *“When we give up our preoccupation with control, we will be able to move with the divine flow. Without all those inner voices of resistance and control, it is amazing how much we can get done and not get tired. Giving up control is a school of union, compassion, and understanding. It is also a school for the final letting go that we call death. When we practice giving up control early in life, we will*

be much happier and much closer to the truth, to the moment, and to God—none of which can be experienced when we try to be in control.”

This bread from heaven is transformative. It changes us in a way Pope Francis described in a pre-Lenten talk on January 27, 2015: *"In each of our neighbors, we see a brother or sister for whom Christ died and rose again. What we ourselves have received, we have received for them as well. Let our parishes become islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference! Let us form hearts to be merciful and open to the needs of others with a strong and steadfast heart open to God."*

This is what the living bread that comes down from heaven tastes like. What a difference this bread would make:

† in our political life where collaboration would replace competition
† in our social life where we would find ourselves standing in awe at what the poor have
to
carry rather than in judgment at how they carry it
† in our economic life where people would become more important than profit
† in our church life where our prayer would change from asking God to come to help us to
opening ourselves to this help - which is always with us

This is the bread we all long for
There are those who are content simply to wait for this bread. I'm not one of them.

This is the bread we all long for,
and we don't have to go to Priest Lake to get it. Right?