

Homily
Friday of the Second Week of Easter
April 21, 2023

In the movie, Monte Python's *Life of Brian*, poor Brian is continually being mistaken for the Messiah. He is in the wrong place at the wrong time, followed by the masses. He even tells the crowd that he is not the Messiah, and yet they cheer him on all the more and continue to follow him. Those people were desperate for something. They needed something. So, they followed him, that is, until he ended up on a cross.

In today's first reading, we hear the tales of Theudas (thee-U-das), who was killed and his 400 followers disbanded, and of Judas the Galilean, whose followers also scattered after his death. Those followers were desperately in need of meaning in their lives. Their lives were empty and missing a purpose.

We could say the same thing of the 5000 men and their families in today's Gospel. They saw the signs Jesus performed on the sick. They followed Him. They were seeking something. Jesus knew their need; they were hungry so He fed them. Isn't that like Jesus today at this very moment? He knows our needs and He is continually providing for us.

It's ironic that just a few verses later in John's Gospel, the same crowd left Jesus. Jesus didn't have to die for the crowds to disperse, He simply told them the truth – that He is the bread come down from heaven; this Bread is His Flesh; Whoever eats His Flesh and Drinks His Blood has eternal life. And for that, the crowds left and returned to their former way of life. I look at this and think that their former way of life was wandering and seeking that something to fill what is missing in their lives.

God gave us this longing. It is the vacancy left by original sin. It is the loneliness that was once filled by God in the Garden of Eden. It is the craving that only He can satisfy. It is the emptiness that we seek so desperately to fill. We may try to fill it with other things, earthly things – money, sex, prestige, popularity, power – all this leaves us feeling empty and lonely and wanting, like empty calories from snacks when only a nutritious, balanced meal will satisfy. There is only one thing that can truly fill and satisfy that void.

Sadly, we often forget what God has done for us. Sadly, we often reject what God offers us. Just look at Gamaliel in the first reading. He knew there was something about these Apostles. He knew that, if their endeavor was of human origin, it would dissipate. If it was of God, there was nothing they could do. The answer was right there in front of him and the Sanhedrin, and they rejected it.

We remember that God is with us always and in many ways. He is with us most prominently in this Word proclaimed and in this Sacrament, soon to be received. Jesus, we trust in You; we crave You; we love You. Jesus, fill us and satisfy us. Amen.