

Reflections for August 2nd – 8th Sunday after Trinity

Bread of tomorrow

Back in the spring, which seems a long time ago now, we began a Lent course, which – of course – we were not able to finish. From one of the sessions that we did use, this story stayed in my mind. Paula Gooder, who devised the course, wrote:

One of the books about prayer that has had the greatest impact on me is a simple, small book called *Sleeping with Bread*. It opens by telling the story of people who worked with child survivors of the concentration camps after the Second World War. To begin with, the children were so traumatised by what had happened to them that they struggled to sleep. Until, by chance, one worker made a discovery. If the children went to bed holding a piece of bread, they could sleep – knowing that come the morning, they would be sure to have something to eat.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are used to saying:

Give us this day our daily bread

asking in faith and trust that God will provide for our needs. But this phrase could also be translated in a slightly different way:

Give us today the bread of tomorrow

which puts the emphasis on trusting that God will continue to bless us, now and in the future. And it may also refer to the idea of 'the banquet of the Kingdom', and so be a prayer that we may come to share in all the eternal blessings of God's future kingdom that is yet to be.

The gospel reading from Matthew for this Sunday is the story we know as 'the feeding of the five thousand', which tells of how Jesus fed a huge crowd of people, beginning with a humble offering of just five loaves of bread and two fish. When I hear it, and as I think of Paula Gooder's story and the words of the Lord's Prayer, I also remember the words of Jesus in John's gospel as he taught the people following the feeding of the crowd:

I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry ...
whoever feeds on this bread will live for ever. (John chapter 6, verse 35, 58)

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Father God, who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life,
that those who come to him should never hunger:
draw us to the Lord in faith and love,
that we may eat and drink with him
at his table in your kingdom for ever.
Amen.

Bible readings: Isaiah 55. 1-5; Romans 9. 1-5; Matthew 14. 13-21