

**Holy Communion Sunday: Holy Trinity Church: November 19, 2017**

**John 13: 1-17: *I am the Bread of Life***

**Preached**

**By The Rev. John E. Higginbotham**

**In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**I love reading children's letters to their priests and pastors. Here are a few of my favorites:**

**Dear Pastor, I know God loves everybody but God never met my sister. Yours sincerely, Arnold. Age 8, Nashville.**

**Dear Pastor, Please say in your sermon that Peter Peterson has been a good boy all week. I am Peter Peterson. Sincerely, Pete. Age 9, Phoenix**

**Dear Pastor, My father should be a priest. Every day he gives us a sermon about something. Robert Anderson, age 11, Tiverton, RI.**

**Dear Pastor, I'm sorry, I can't give you any more money in the plate, because my father didn't give me a raise in my allowance. Could you have a sermon about a raise in my allowance? Love, Patty. Age 10, New Haven**

**Dear Pastor, My mother is very religious. She goes to play bingo at church every week even if she has a cold. Yours truly, Annette. Age 9, Albany**

**Dear Pastor, I would like to go to heaven someday because I know my brother won't be there. Stephen. Age 8, Chicago**

**Dear Pastor, I think a lot more people would come to your church if you moved it to Disneyland. Loreen. Age 9, Tacoma**

**Dear Pastor, I liked your sermon where you said that good health is more important than money but I still want a raise in my allowance. Sincerely, Eleanor, Age 12, Sarasota**

**Boys and girls, let's talk about Eleanor's letter for a moment. What is really important in our lives? What is it that is more important than money? You know a long, long time ago, in a place far, far away, the prophet Isaiah asked one of life's most profound questions: "Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy?" Pretty good question, don't you think? Then Isaiah added: "Listen, listen to me and eat what is good."**

**Boys and girls, you were taught in your Holy Communion class that at the Last Supper Jesus took a loaf of bread and blessed it, and broke it; and he gave the bread to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."**

**Bread is a good word. Bread is a word we use a lot around the church and our homes. Bread is important to life. It is a food for our bodies. You can go around the world and some sort of bread is found in every culture and country. We have Italian bread, New York rye, Matzah crackers, scones, white bread, whole wheat, English muffins, etc. When I was in the Navy, sometimes the men in my division would do something bad and the Captain would send them to jail for 3 days with nothing else to eat and drink but bread and water.**

**All of them survived. Jesus knew the needs of the human body. Remember, Jesus knew all about hunger and thirst. Do you remember when Jesus was hungry and thirsty in the wilderness? Jesus grew up in a Jewish home where his mother, Mary, made bread everyday for her family. Jesus used bread in the Passover meal. Do you remember that Jesus fed almost 15,000 people bread and fish because he knew they were hungry and he had mercy and compassion on them. He would not allow them to go home hungry. What a marvelous, unbelievable miracle! 15,000 men, women and children were fed from a small lunch of a very young boy who offered to Jesus a few loaves of bread and fish. All four gospels tell this story. What an impression it left on the people. The bible says that bread was multiplied in Jesus hands. The crowd went crazy by the miracle and wanted to name Jesus king, but he**

**refused, and he went up a mountain to be alone to pray and talk with His Father. And after this great miracle Jesus walked on water and caught up with his friends on the boat.**

**Throughout history bread has been very important to human survival.**

**Immediately after a big war stopped, American soldiers gathered up many hungry and homeless children and placed them in tent cities. Many of them were starving and in need of a doctor's care. The soldiers shared their bread with them. However, the soldiers noticed the children were afraid to go to sleep at night. One of the soldiers tried an experiment after dinner. He gave the children a piece of bread to hold. The result was astounding. When they had the security of bread for tomorrow they slept like babies. It took away their fear.**

**You know boys and girls, the disciples wanted to send the people away hungry. However, Jesus loved people and he cared for the people and all of their needs. He took away their hunger and fear. Jesus sees the people are hungry, but he knows they also have a deeper hunger. That is true today and that is where you, I and Holy Trinity Church go hand in hand because Jesus has a job for each and every one of us. Does anyone know what job Jesus has given all of us? Jesus wants us to love and serve people just the way He loved**

**and served everyone he met. If Jesus came only to fill our empty bellies, then the world could have been saved by the Pillsbury Dough Boy and the bakers of Wonder bread.**

**Girls and boys, when you receive Holy Communion, the body and blood of Jesus, Jesus is giving all of us His living bread, His life. Jesus gives to us the bread of life to feed our spiritual hunger for meaning and purpose and fulfillment and happiness. Meaning and purpose and fulfillment and happiness comes when you serve someone. Otherwise, our lives are empty. In the words of a prophet from the 1960's, "you gotta serve somebody."**

**So boys and girls, how are you going to serve like Jesus served every one?**

**Let's look at a few ways. Do you think Jesus might have helped his mother Mary and his father Joseph around the house and in the carpentry shop? Do you think you could help your mom and dad around the house like raking the leaves or helping to clear the table after supper? When you go to school, is there a classmate who sits alone at lunch time? How do you think it feels to eat all alone when no one wants to sit with you? If you walked over and sat down and ate your sandwich with your classmate, do you think you could become the bread of life to that kid? Do you think you could be Jesus the servant to that kid? I think you would. Could you become a friend to the kid in school**

**who is picked upon and bullied? Maybe, just maybe, your friendship would end that bullying and teasing. Do you guys get my drift? That is how you serve Jesus. What about the sad kid? What about the lonely kid? What about the kid who is picked on because he or she is different? Just ask yourself this huge question, what would Jesus do? You are probably saying Fr. John, how can I do that? I will tell you how. When you come to the altar and you take Holy Communion every Sunday, your heart will never be empty and you will be happy all the days of your life because the living Jesus will live inside of you all the days of your life and you will be strong and you will never be alone. Amen.**