

From The Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster  
Sunday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, Pentecost X, What Food  
2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a, Psalm 51:1-12, Ephesians 4:1-16, John 6:24-35

It has been said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. And we as Anglicans love to eat together, so the banquet is a significant image for me. Jesus talks about food that endures for eternal life. I don't think he is talking about non-perishable food or loading up on preservatives, because maybe he is talking about another kind of food or feeding.

When Jesus asks Peter if he loves him three times and tells him to feed his sheep I believe he is talking about more than food, for one thing the banquets we enjoy together are not just about the food.

I am reminded about what I often have said in funerals, so sorry if you've heard this already. Kevin Peterbeski, and classmate of mine way back when commented about what is real and what is an illusion. He said that things which don't last are an illusion and things that last are real. Is love real or an illusion? It is very hard to define, and touch, so easy to say it might be an illusion, yet it does last and I believe is real.

The question asked of Jesus; *what must we do to perform the works of God?* Jesus answered them, *"This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."*

This is not just or so much about what we say about God or Christ, what we say we believe, as acting in ways which show trust in God.

And I can't help thinking of Psalm 23; *you prepare a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me.* This is not just our enemies but those who have issues and need our help. So this means being with those who trouble us at the table of the Lord, at the banquet with them. This again means passing on the love of God we receive for ourselves.

There is a call and a challenge for unity, and being in relationship even with those we disagree with and are different from us. This is expressed in Ephesians today, with the declaration also in the baptism service; *there is one body, and one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*

The thought which comes to mind, is the one expressed around the metaphor and image of immigration. That is of the host country being a melting pot. Yes there is

unity and a singularity of purpose and identity, but people and groups lose their sense of identity.

I like the image of a salad rather than a melting pot. Each ingredient in the salad retains its integrity and identity but works together to make the salad taste good.

So not only do we come to the banquet to enjoy the salad and the other great ingredients, (yes I know some of you may not be fond of salads, yet why do we at picnic services ask one of the guest churches to bring salads?)

We come for the food and also for the company and fellowship, that the relationship grows and even with our differences we can respect each other and say; *there is one body, and one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*

Amen.