

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B.

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15 Ephesians 4:17, 20-24 John 6:24-35

HOMILY

One of the games children love to play is *'Hide and Seek'*. It's a game that never goes out of date across all cultures among children. The people in today's gospel reading are portrayed as seekers: going into boats to look for Jesus until they found him. There was something praiseworthy about their search for Jesus. Yet, Jesus' opening words to them suggests that they are searching for him for the wrong reasons. They are looking for him because they had all the bread they wanted to eat. (Last Sunday's Gospel).

Of course, it is clear from the gospels, that Jesus was very concerned about people's basic bodily needs, their need for food and drink, for shelter and clothing, for health and wholeness of body and mind. He even clearly told his own followers that to do these to others was doing them to him.

All of those good works remained at the heart of Jesus' ministry, and he wants them to remain at the heart of every church community today. All the same, Jesus wants people to recognize that there is more to him than someone who works to satisfy people's basic needs. That's why he says today: *'work for the food that endures to eternal life.'* He is calling on us to attend to this deeper spiritual hunger in our lives.

When the crowd rightly ask, *'What must we do?'* to work for the food that endures to eternal life, Jesus gives a precise answer: *'you must believe in the one whom he has sent'*.

This is an invitation to a personal friendship with himself. This is what will really satisfy our deepest desires. Our good works will then flow from our relationship with him.