

**31 OTB.18;** Dt 6:2-6; Heb 7:23-28; Mark 12:28b-34... *God eats Bread!*

**Let me tell you a story ....**

In the 16th century, the Jews were expelled from Spain & went all over Europe. **Jacob**, a kind & devout shoemaker, ended up in Israel. He went to the synagogue every Sabbath, and even though he didn't understand Hebrew,

**... he listened intently to what the rabbi was saying.**

One Sabbath he understood just two words of the sermon - the word 'God' and the word 'bread'. When he got home he said to his wife, *'The rabbi told us that God*

*... eats bread. You must bake bread & I'll bring it to God next Sabbath.'*

His wife baked some loaves of bread, and the following Sabbath Jacob brought them to the synagogue & placed them in the holy ark. He said to God,

*'I've got your bread. You'll love it. My wife is the best baker in the country.'*

**No sooner had he left than in came the synagogue's caretaker.** He said, *'Lord, you know I love to come to this holy place. But seven weeks now I've been working and haven't been paid. I need a miracle. I'll open the Holy Ark, and maybe there will be something to eat.'* The caretaker opened the ark, and was delighted to find

**... seven fresh loaves of bread, one for each day of the week.**

The next day when Jacob opened the ark & saw that the bread had been taken, he was overjoyed. This went on week after week. Then one day Jacob came to the synagogue with his loaves of bread as usual. He placed them in the ark and was about to leave when the rabbi grabbed him.

**'What are you doing?' the rabbi demanded.**

**'I'm bringing God his bread,' Jacob replied. 'God doesn't eat bread!'**

**'Well, God's been eating my wife's bread for several weeks!'**

The rabbi & Jacob hid to see if they could figure out what was going on.

Soon the caretaker came in. As he reached in to take the bread, the rabbi grabbed him.

*The rabbi began to yell at the two men, telling them how bad they were, until all three men began to cry.*

-Jacob was crying because his only intention was to do good.

-The rabbi was crying because all this was happening because of his sermon.

-And the caretaker was crying because he realized there wouldn't be any more bread. **Suddenly the three men heard laughter in the corner.**

They turned round to see the great mystic, Isaac Luria, standing there. He said, *'Rabbi, these men are not bad men. They are devout men. You must*

beg their forgiveness.’ Then turning to Jacob he said, ‘*Jacob, you have been doing a great thing. But now you must do something even greater. You must bring your bread directly to the caretaker. And you must believe with perfect faith*

*... that God will be just as pleased.’ And so it was.*

*(New Sunday, Holy Day Liturgies, F. McCarthy, 31 OTB)*

Love is the defining characteristic of God. This Love must create Life.

**2 Jesus** answers a question from one of the scribes, “*Which is the first and greatest of the commandments?*” Jesus replies without hesitation, “**The first is this: Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.** (Deuteronomy: 6:4-6) **The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** (Leviticus 19:18b) *There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

Love of God is Love of Neighbor. Love of Neighbor is Love of God.

Jesus unites the commandments by Love.

**The scribe** agrees with Jesus: **to love God and our neighbor wholeheartedly**

... is the path to life in God's kingdom.

**What a challenge. What a possibility. What an incredible way to live.**

**This is energizing! This is daunting!**

**How can we love this way? How do we even choose our priorities?**

Many holy women and men have recommended - “*Falling in love with God.*” “**Nothing is more practical,**” said + Fr. Pedro Arrupe, the late Superior General of the Jesuits. **Why practical? Because when we are in love,** we know our priorities, we know each day how we will devote our time and talents. And when we are in love we find time to care for our relationships. *Fr. Pedro said,*

**“Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.”**

*(Adapted: Living with Christ, 11/2012)*

A small unassuming woman, St. Mother Teresa lived this life and observed, “*I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus.*” — Mother Teresa

**Jacob’s Bread placed into the hands of Jesus is the way .....**

We ordinary mortals can love this way.

We ordinary mortals can deliver *Jacob's bread* ... to one person at a time.

**And that *bread* takes many forms.** We have all been saddened at the rise in hate language & violence. We must not be silent. We must stand with the Jewish community in Pittsburg at the *Tree of Life* synagogue; with the African American families of those gunned down in a supermarket in Kentucky after their killers failed to enter a Black church; with all those who have suffered from hate violence in our LGBT community and with those cannot stand up for themselves. *Hate is overcome by Love.* We can & must co-create a world of peace & justice today.

***At this Liturgy of the Great Commandment,*** we celebrate Divine Love reaching down to us. Let us reach up by caring for our neighbors and for our world.

If you understand this, as Jesus says,

***“You are not far from the kingdom of God.” -Just remember, God eats Bread!***