

Guest Meditations:

One early, cloudy morning when I was forty-six, I walked into a church, ate a piece of bread, took a sip of wine. This was my first communion. It changed everything. The mysterious sacrament turned out to be not a symbolic wafer at all but actual food—indeed, the bread of life.

I realized that what I'd been doing with my life all along was what I was meant to do: feed people. And so I did. I took communion, I passed the bread to others, and then I kept going, compelled to find new ways to share what I'd experienced. I started a food pantry and gave away literally tons of fruit and vegetables and cereal around the same altar where I'd first received the body of Christ. I organized new pantries all over my city to provide hundreds and hundreds of hungry families with free groceries each week. . . .

Holy communion knocked me upside down and forced me to deal with the impossible reality of God.

Sara Miles

Let no one delay in coming to the supper. Let us put aside all idle wicked excuses, and come to the supper in which our souls are fed. Let no swelling of pride keep us back, or lift us above ourselves; and neither let unlawful superstition frighten us, or turn us away from God. Let not the delights of

the senses keep us from the delight of the soul. Let us come, and let us be feasted. And who have come but the poor and the feeble and the lame and the blind? But the rich have not come there, nor the healthy, who as it were could walk well and see clearly, sure of themselves, and the more arrogant they were, the more endangered.

Let the poor come, for he who invites us, though rich, became poor for our sakes, that by his poverty we might be made rich.

Let the feeble come, for they who are in health need not the physician, but they that are ill. Let the lame come. Let the blind come.

Compel them to come in. I have prepared a great supper, a great house. I shall suffer no place there to remain empty.

The Gentiles came from the streets and the lanes. Let the heretics come from the hedges; here they will find peace. For they who make hedges are seeking to bring about divisions. Let them be drawn from the hedges; let them be plucked free from the thorns. They refuse to be compelled, and they cling to their hedges. Let us, they say, come in of our own will. But this is not what the Lord commanded.

Compel them, he says, to come in.

Augustine



Food for Thought

Introduction:

In Jesus' parable about a great banquet, those invited do not come, so the invitation is extended to others. In our liturgy God spreads a table before us. Even amid anxiety and hardship we rejoice in the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. With great joy we feast at the table of the Lord, and we go forth to share the wonderful invitation with others hungering and thirsting for the abundant life of God.

First Lesson:

Exodus tells us of an impatient people in Israel. Moses has gone to Mount Sinai for the Ten Commandments, and the people, not willing to wait, have Aaron fashion them a golden calf, often the beast carrying the god Ba'al in idols that depict him. Unwilling to wait for God, the people create empty rituals, not willing to admit that God's pace is not the pace of an impatient people. Trust in God is necessary for every trial, including a lengthy stay in the desert.

[Epistle:

The Epistle today provides the text for our Collect. Paul's letter to the Philippians is written from prison at a time when the apostle faced possible martyrdom. Nevertheless, his words reveal concern for the needs of others and convey an attitude of joy, hope, gratitude, and peace.]

Second Lesson:

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders of his day, indicating that even though God's kingdom is a great feast open to all, its coming will prove disastrous for some.