

When We Pray for Bread

6 Meditations for Communion

When we pray for bread¹ ...

we pray for what is concrete.

Jesus did not invite us to pray for food.

Food is abstract, general, removed.

Bread is concrete, specific, particular.

So do not be vague or obscure in our prayers.

To pray for bread is to pray for what is real and substantial.

Pray that we will be as real as bread is real.

When we pray for bread ...

we pray for what is basic.

Jesus did not invite us to pray for cake.

Cake is superfluous, peripheral, unnecessary.

Bread is fundamental, central; essential.

So do not be elaborate or excessive in our prayers.

To pray for bread is to pray for the heart of the matter.

To pray for bread is to pray that we will be as nourishing of life as bread is.

¹ I am aware of the cultural problems with using “bread” as a global food, and of the health concerns for many. I trust that praying, for example, “that we will be as nourishing of life as bread is” will provoke conversations about these limitations and dangers; and push communities to image concrete ways to meet these challenges.

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When we pray for bread ...

we pray for what is common.

Jesus did not invite us to pray for caviar.

Caviar is costly and privileged.

Bread is affordable and available.

So do not be arrogant or proud in our prayers.

To pray for bread is to pray to share in the fate of common people.

To pray for bread is to pray that we will be as ordinary as bread is.

When we pray for bread ...

we pray for what is manufactured.

Jesus did not invite us to pray for manna.

Manna falls down heaven, whole and complete.

Bread is the product of the living earth and human labour.

So do not be privileged and pie-in-the-sky in our prayers.

To pray for bread is to pray for the wellbeing of the earth, of farmers, of millers, of bakers, of marketers.

To pray for bread is to pray that we will be as collective as bread is.

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When we pray for daily bread ...

we pray for what is immediate.

Jesus did not invite us to pray for tomorrow's bread.

Tomorrow is another day.

Daily is right here, right now.

So do not pray for possibly, one day, maybe.

To pray for daily bread is to pray for what is needed now.

To pray for daily bread is to pray that we will be as fully in the present as bread is.

When we pray for daily bread ...

we pray for what is ongoing.

Jesus did not invite us to pray for bread for a lifetime.

Bread for a lifetime seeks security against the future.

Daily bread is ongoing, taking each day as it comes.

So do not pray for protection against what the future might bring.

To pray for daily bread is to pray for the means to deal with each day as it comes.

To pray for daily bread is to pray that we will be as resourceful as bread is.