

Lent Devotional April 1, 2025

Scripture

John 6:16-27

16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. 20 But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. 23 Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."

Devotion

The Rev. Carol Divens Roth '85

If you are someone who observes April Fool's Day, today, you may already have been the prankster or the prankee. According to legend—and Rutgers University—the origin of the day goes back to 16th century France, when the Julian calendar (new year beginning April 1) was replaced with the Gregorian calendar (new year beginning Jan. 1). Word didn't get around to everyone in a timely manner, so some continued to celebrate on April 1. Hence, in that unkind time when name-calling was more prevalent, the label "April fools" came to be.

In today's passage from John 6, the sense of that label appears to come from Jesus, aimed at the crowds who followed him looking for a repeat of the loaves and fishes multiplication. They have experienced a miracle and, not surprisingly, want more of the same. They have missed the reset on the calendar of faith, failing to recognize that he is the beginning and the ending, the Alpha and Omega. He is the Bread of Life, and by what he says and how he acts, he feeds us the Word of God. He defies gravity, sin, and death. He embodies the Kin-dom of God, which is the time and place where all are to live in rightness and love toward the other, where all are to be fed and all are to feed the other—a multiplication feat of miraculous proportions, where dehumanizing labels are supplanted by "neighbor."

On the Lenten journey, today is a good day to reflect on what it may mean to begin a new counting of our days, daring to defy any status quo that turns us away from God and neighbor, or from daring to claim a proud label: Fool for Christ.

Prayer

God of Grace and Glory,

Let this and every day begin with you. Give me courage to follow across uncertain seas, buoyed by your voice, saying, "Do not be afraid." Fill me with the Bread of Life so I, in turn, may break holy bread with the Other and name them as my sisters and brothers. Claim me as your kind, devoted fool. Amen.