

## Take and Eat

We could say that each of us started out at birth with only five loaves and two fishes. What I mean is that our capacity for what we call food for thought seemed quite limited back then – our mother’s milk was sufficient to keep us alive – but our capacity for knowing things, for understanding, wisdom, a deeper sense of the world into which we were born – was untested. There was so much we were as yet unaware of.

But as time went on we began to assimilate things – at least notice things if not think about them. The “buffet” of objects presented to us day after day was enough to satisfy our appetite. Elementary school widened the table – we learned language, how to talk, add, subtract, picked up on this thing called time – especially the past and perhaps little of the present. And so it went. New stages of education to be digested until we began to be choosey, have opinions or at least be led from one opinion to another.

But all that was about everyday realities. We were also introduced to “realities” that somehow resided beyond our neighborhood – realities such as God, a hereafter, a destiny that might be ok or not ok . . . angels, souls, good and evil (which Genesis warned us not to monkey with). And so our capacity, our appetite for learning things advanced – except that the demands of everyday survival turned our minds into learning not so much *to know things* as *how to do things*. We left a purely educational atmosphere in order to go to work – to buy the actual food we had to eat.

And then? How many of us rarely open a book again to dine upon its contents – to taste its fare, backing off if it is in anyway too different to the tastes we are used to. I mean how many of us stop thinking about why we are here, why are we on this planet, where do we go from here – how did this all come about, who or what am I other than what my name tag says? Philosophy? Forget it! Theology? Forget it! McDonald’s is my preference; fast food only.

And yet our awareness of the storehouses of scholarship, of science, and especially of literature – sacred and secular – has grown – inviting us to consume so much more than the five loaves and two fishes we started out with. If we are fortunate we may experience at some point in our lives (and I’m talking about blue collar workers and not just academic highbrows) what our biblical Job underwent – in all his know-it-all petulance. He was caught short by his Creator with questions like:

*Have you ever thought about where this earth comes from; do you know anything about the size of the universe; how deep is the sea; where does the dawn come from – other than scientifically speaking; aside from dawn to dusk what do you mean by light and darkness; what is a sacrament; why do you come to Mass; what do you hope for; **why!** do you hope; why do you love; why is there not nothing?*

Five loaves and two fishes to begin with – a banquet is laid out before you ever since – inexhaustible since there will always be twelve baskets full of fragments left over. If you have foregone thinking, meditating, reading – reawaken your hunger; take and eat.