

The Inuit people have 23 different words to describe various conditions of what we would just call “**snow**.” If you live in places like Alaska snow is a big part of your experience and so you use lots of words to deal with it. On the other hand most people in the US wouldn’t know the word “**hearth**” – which BTW is the front or foundation of a fireplace – because we now routinely use central heating rather than build a fire to keep warm.

Experience can introduce new words to a language – like bling, OMG, unfriend – and allow words to slowly die out. We are not a polite society anymore and in spite of the valiant effort of some parents, it is rare to kids say “**please**.” When you literally bump into someone in a store, it’s rare to hear someone say, “**Excuse me**” or “**sorry**.”

Another word slowly vanishing from our vocabulary is “**enough**.” Who goes to an all-you-can-eat buffet and takes a sensible amount of food? But we are equally unable to say “enough” when it comes to our consumption of material goods. We spend money we do not have for things we do not need, because we have swallowed the bait, hook-line-and-sinker, from the advertisers who lure us to believe that our lives would not be complete without the latest fashion or the latest sparkling gizmo to roll off the manufacturer’s assembly line. Meanwhile, we have too many clothes in our closet already, and our homes are so full of acquired merchandise we have to rent a storage unit across town just to make room for the additional stuff we are purchasing. Why can’t our desire for things, for more, be satisfied?

Our gospel addresses this question with the story of Jesus feeding the Five Thousand, the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. This is a story, in fact it is the only miracle story, told in all four gospel accounts, so it must contain a particularly important lesson. The message for today is contained in the concluding verses of the passage, after the miracle itself. Saint Luke simply says, “**they all ate, and were satisfied.**” A group of human beings *satisfied*—now that is a rare and wondrous thing to behold!

So here they are, the disappearing words in our language, “**enough, content, satisfied.**” It seems that the more we have, the more we want, and the less satisfied we feel. We think we want more stuff, but in fact this hunger for more, this rampant consumption, is consuming us. You can hear this lament in our popular songs. In 1965 The Rolling Stones rode atop the pop charts for an entire month with their song, *(I Can't Get no) Satisfaction*, a song that catapulted the band to stardom by naming the dissatisfaction many people feel in a consumer-driven, pleasure-oriented society. And in 2002 Sheryl Crow's hit single, *Soak Up the Sun*, echoed this same lament about desires gone wild. Listen to the words of her refrain, as she tries to sort out the secret to happiness in life: “***It's not having what you want; It's wanting what you've got.***” She may be on to something there. Happiness, contentment, fulfillment do not reside outside of us, attached to the next acquisition or conquest. Rather, satisfaction is a treasure that must be mined from within.

So, what does our scripture story teach us about this elusive jewel called “the pursuit of happiness”? Our Lord was faced that day on the hillside with a multitude of people and a small band of disciples who all shared a common misperception about the universe. They operated from an assumption that there was not enough to go around, that their lives were defined by scarcity rather than abundance. And so that very fear kept them all bound to a life of scrambling and scratching out an existence in a world that favored only the most aggressive, where only the early bird got the worm, where the rich could get richer and the poor would get poorer only because there was not enough for all of them in the first place. Only the fittest could survive in such a competitive world. **Does that world sound familiar to you?**

But Jesus had come to show us a life based on an entirely new set of assumptions about the universe. Jesus operated out of a basic sense of abundance and blessing; that is, that God had provided enough for every legitimate need in creation. Jesus knew that the only thing that is needed for everyone and everything to prosper and thrive is to share the abundance rather than hoard it. And it is true. Did you know that **there is enough food produced to end world hunger right now?** Poverty and hunger are not problems of overpopulation, but poor distribution. Those of us who pile up more than they need are simply living in fear; fear that there will not be enough for later, fear that someone will try to steal what has been stockpiled, fear that God cannot be trusted to provide for his creation. So this fear makes us aggressive and self-serving; it consumes our sense of safety and satisfaction,

no matter how much we acquire. Just look at us. We have so much, and yet still we are not satisfied.

Maybe we should try learning again what Jesus taught the hungry crowd on the hillside that day. **Trust God to take what looks meager and make it enough.** In fact with 12 baskets of left-overs in this story, it was more than enough.

The Eucharist we receive today is more than enough for all the needs and desires that really matter.

- **Do you need to know that someone loves you and cares for you?** Come to the lord who gave his life for you.
- **Do you need to know that you matter, that you are important to someone?** Come down the aisle to meet with the creator of heaven and earth who is anxious to be part of your life.
- **Do you need strengthen to carry on in a difficult situation?** Come to the lord who promised to always be with you, always at your side.
- **Do you feel lost, confused, exhausted?** Come to the one who is the way, the truth and life itself.
- **Do you wonder if what you do, what you accomplish really matters?** Accept the lord's invitation of make his life part of yours and your life a continuation of his as his hands and voice and presence for the people around you.

For non-believers, the Eucharist looks a bit of bread and a sip of wine, but we see there the body of Christ – all that makes him who he is – and the blood of Christ – his life force vibrant and active. And that is so much more than enough.