

Thanksgiving Day
Deuteronomy 26:1-11,
Philippians 4:4-9, John 6:25-35
Rev Fanny Belanger

As I am still learning about Thanksgiving, I had fun this past week
reading in the paper how to deal with
the whole thing.

Specific to this electoral year,
I found more than a few articles about how to handle political issues around the table
– especially when the members of your family aren't on the same board.
*Should we talk about "it",
should we avoid it at all costs?*

But as you can imagine, most articles were about food.
And a lot of them weren't about recipes but about how to deal with
all this food.
How many calories are we going to eat this Thanksgiving?
What is it going to take to work them off?
*Should I eat the pecan pie,
should I avoid it at all costs?*

Well, most of the recommendations were the same: Take the time to discern what you really want,
enjoy what you have on your plate,
chew.
Chew.

That's true. We often forget to chew and it can make things hard to stomach.
It's the same in our lives.
We just run run run and get things done,
We don't take the time to discern and understand
to taste and enjoy
It can make things difficult to swallow.
But that's what festivals are for,
Festivals are made for chewing.

Jewish people knew about festivals. They had several times in the year where they would do
Remembrance of their stories, remembrance of their History.
They would chew on what God had done for them.
- Easter. The liberation from Egypt.

*Remember you were an alien
Remember the Lord saw your affliction
Remember you were fed in the wilderness.*

Today is a day where we are invited to go back to our roots.
Our roots as a nation, obviously
with the remembrance of the first settlements, evoking our History.
Our roots as individuals,
gathering with family over the generations, retelling our stories.

Today we remember who we are.
Today we chew on our meals, on our stories, on our History.

And today, interestingly, Jesus by offering himself as the bread of life,
invites us to chew on God.

It's too bad we miss the first part of today's story.

We miss the first part of the story, but that's okay because you probably know it very well

It's the feeding of the five thousands.

And so Jesus did this great miracle, and after that he withdrew in the hills and crossed the sea and now the crowd catches up with him and

They ask Jesus to help them believe.

What sign are you going to give us, so that we may see it and believe you?

What work are you performing? They're asking.

When Jesus had just fed five thousands people with five loaves and two fish.

Wow. This is really short-term memory.

Maybe you are like me, you have very short-term memory in everyday life.

You know you enter a room and you don't remember why you came in.

Oh well. But today the Gospel tells us about a more serious kind of forgetfulness:

Spiritual forgetfulness, that is.

Jesus has just made this great miracle – and overnight

the crowd has already forgotten everything about it

or at least, is unable to see the meaning of it.

As I read this text I was wondering: Aren't we the same?

We often complain we cannot see God in our lives,

but maybe it's our short-term memory that is to blame.

Do we ever look at our lives to see

what's God has done for us, maybe not in one day, but overtime?

It is not a coincidence that Jesus compares himself with the bread.

You cannot be fed with real thick bread unless you chew on it.

And so you have to chew on God to be fed by God.

No wonder we don't see God if we never stop, never remember,

never try to understand

where we come from and where we are today, and where God is calling us to be next.

You see, it is with our souls as it is with our stomachs, we can never be full or satisfied –

if we don't take the time to taste and to enjoy.

Rejoice, says Paul.

Today we have

A day to rejoice and to give thanks.

Being thankful it's not being a little grateful

after having enjoyed the good things that we have been given.

Being thankful is mostly about being able to really enjoy the goodness, as we would enjoy a good meal.

And hopefully, more important than the meal, is the company.

So today, may we discover God's companionship with us as we chew on the goodness in our lives.

At the end, the real goodness it's not so much about what was *on our plates* than the knowing that God has been with us all along. Amen.