

## Lenten Devotional March 10, 2024

### Scripture

#### John 6:27-40

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." 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." 30 So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?" 31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37 Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; 38 for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."

### Devotion

#### The Rev. Dr. Cindy Parker '10

In December of 1991 I married my college sweetheart. He was raised Catholic in a small town in western Pennsylvania, and I grew up attending The First Presbyterian Church of Bernardsville, N.J. During the seventeen years we were married, I occasionally accompanied him to mass and agreed to baptize our three daughters in the Catholic Church. Whenever I visited his church, I was never welcome at the Lord's Table. I was invited to walk forward with my children, but was always denied the bread and the cup because I was not Catholic.

We divorced in the spring of 2007, and I began my studies at PTS in the fall of that same year. The following year I was able to travel to Israel with a group from PTS and it was there that I understood Jesus' words for the first time, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Our group spent Saturday night in the small town of Jifna, where we were invited to worship the following morning with Father Emil's Catholic congregation. As the priest stood up at the communion table my stomach sank. "Another table where I won't be welcome," I thought. Then Father Emil did something surprising—he invited all of us up to receive communion!

Tears streamed down my cheeks as I walked forward to celebrate, truly celebrate, that I was excluded no longer, there was a place for me at the Lord's Table!

**Prayer**

Bread of Life, help us to understand that your grace is sufficient to welcome ALL to your table. Amen.