

Homily
27th Sunday OT – A

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
October 03-04, 2026

Is 5: 1-7
Ps 80: 9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20
Phil 4: 6-9
Mt 21: 33-43

The death knell of me happens to be fresh baked bread. This corpus does not need starch and does not need sugar. yet, when you get a loaf of bread that comes out of the oven, there is nothing better. I used to work at a bakery – pastry coming directly from an oven or fryer is the best taste... EVER! .

There is nothing better than a donut coming out of the fryer at 2:00 a.m., when it is fresh, or a loaf of bread coming right out of an oven. If you dine at a restaurant and you get that warm loaf of bread with butter, you absolutely go crazy with it, which usually means I do not have enough room for the main course, because I am feeding myself all on the bread.



I was going to someone's house prior to this homily to have dinner with them, and they made the grilled steak glazed with brown sugar. In addition to the variety of side dishes, I also was served the warm bread coming out of the oven, followed by homemade blueberry pie (there was a time when I used to kid that whenever I offered house blessings, I looked forward to the blueberry pie that came with it... and gained a hundred pounds in the process, one slice of blueberry pie at a time!). Whenever I visit this family, I am usually so tired and so full when I leave their house that I barely make it back home in one piece, and, if I do make it home, then usually I collapse immediately upon my return.

I was thinking about this experience because I usually have the same one when I visit my father's wife, Maria Jankowski, after a long Sunday ministry. Maria usually serves me a dinner that could easily feed a small army, always preceded by the phrase, "I made something small" and always followed by the phrase "Was the dinner edible?" My dog usually collapses over table scraps during the middle of the dinner and I usually soon follow when dinner is complete.

Maria's dinners have formed this large, hulking figure that you see before you. That said, there is one part of Maria's food repertoire that joyfully is lacking – Maria rarely makes bread from scratch. When Maria does make bread, I normally enter my “food coma” moments with everything else she presents me, so when the fresh bread hits the kitchen table on a Sunday night, I know that I will sleep well about one hour after dinner is served.

That said...

One time at Maria's house, she made a loaf of warm bread that she insisted I take with me to Loyola University in Chicago, at a time two decades ago when I was taking theology classes, right down by the Lake Shore. Twenty or so years ago, I finished dinner at the house in Plainfield on my way to Chicago with that steaming loaf of bread filling my car with bakery aromas. During my travel, I was just thinking about how that warm bread with butter would settle me into a long fall slumber when I reached the parking lot right by St. Ignatius Church, where I spent my nights during my studies (the retired Archbishop

Jerome Listecky served as pastor of that Church when I lived at the parish).

Upon my arrival, I encountered a homeless person that approached me as I parked my car. The person was disheveled and looked like he needed something to get him through the day. This homeless person asked me for some money to get a meal but, alas, I said to the person that I had no money on me (which was true). Instead, all I had in my possession to give him was this warm loaf of Maria Jankowski bread. I really wanted to keep the bread – I probably coveted the bread more than I should have. That said, the man looked more in need of sustenance than I did, so I gave him the warm loaf of bread. So I gave the loaf of bread to him, promised to offer a prayer for God for his situation and then made my way to St. Ignatius Church in Chicago without my late-night snack in hand.

The next day, I attended the classes at Loyola University, went to the house to say goodbye to the staff at St. Ignatius and then returned to the car in the St. Ignatius parking lot. When I returned, at the foot of my car,

was that Maria Jankowski loaf of bread that was tossed to the ground after I gave it to a homeless man.

At that moment, I thought about what had just happened – this kind of experience happens to me a lot in the ministry God asks me to follow. You try to do a lot of good things for others, but often the people who receive those things sometimes are not appreciative or respond to you in a very negative way. People want what they want, and no matter how much good you do for them, they end up responding badly. This is the basic theme of our scripture readings today.

In the first reading from the prophet Isaiah, the author reproaches the leaders of the faith because they are not living a good life and are not modeling the type of God-inspired leadership that they were called to follow. Isaiah he warns the leaders of the faith concerning the repercussions of their actions.

In our second reading from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, we focus on this case from the opposite end of the spectrum. The faithful of Philippi knew that Paul was returning to Jerusalem, most likely for the

last time prior to his arrest and execution. St. Paul was determined to bring the faithful of the Church's "home base" monies from his travels to support the faithful.

The residents of Phillipi knew very well that once Paul returned to Jerusalem that the authorities would take him into custody.

Nevertheless, Paul returned he goes back anyway, because that is his mission and that is his journey. St. Paul wrote this passage on which we focus today as a type of "love letter" to this community who really loved God and really loved Paul's ministry. Paul encouraged the faithful of Philippi to preach Christ crucified, to live the life of the gospel message and to be like Christ in their daily trials.

Today's gospel reading focuses on a landowner who had this wonderful vineyard where many workers made a living. When time came for harvest, the workers took advantage of their landowner. The workers did not want to share the fruits of the produce so, instead of giving thanks, they attacked his servants who came to receive the fruits of their labor. As a result, the workers beat the servants and killed the

son, mistakenly thinking that by killing the son they would become the heir to the fortune. As we have learned through the centuries, people want what they want and they will destroy anyone who gets in their way.

In response to these heinous actions, God responds accordingly, just as the landowner did. The message from the gospel, the message from our readings, is that if we choose to live outside of God's way, if we prefer to live our way and turn ourselves into "little gods" instead of following the law of love from the only God that counts, there are repercussions to our actions.

This message is a hard one to swallow and certainly is not for the meek of heart. It a hard message to live. However, I would like to think for myself that by understanding what God is teaching us, I am obligated out of love to serve others anyway, knowing the repercussions of what will happen if I live this kind of life, by following the directions of my God and landowner.

Sometimes I live what God asks me to do very well and sometimes I live very badly. I try to sacrifice and empty myself to tell God that I care by taking whatever I have and giving it away, just as God tells me to do. Regardless of how people respond to what I do, this life I choose to live is the key for me to entering heaven... and it is key to you as well. The key for me is to live the message, not just to pray it, but to live it, not just to give lip service, but to let it enter my *huesos*, my bones, to live Christ crucified, knowing full well that the repercussions of these actions are not going to be good, but they are going to be like Christ.

So we pray for those who make that sacrifice, for those who go into the fields to do God's work. We pray for those who live by the way of love and suffer because of this despite the opposition of the world, who want otherwise. Please pray for them and please pray for me. I pray that you can be strong as well in living, serving and preaching this message to the people that we meet. This is our prayer.