

I got this in the mail this week. "Major Award Notice." Did you ever get one of these? "Dear Respondent, Several weeks ago, we attempted to notify you of your selection as a National Finalist. You and your family had been selected to represent the Midwest section of the United States. What this meant was that you had either won the Cadillac or one of the other finalist awards, subject to the conditions of this offer. The finalist awards are: 1) 1988 Cadillac (\$15,000 worth of a brand new automobile simply for viewing our resort); 2) Combination washer and dryer (Unique compact design - energy efficient); or 3) \$2,000.00 Cash (Your \$2,000 will be presented by a cashier's check on the day of visit.)"

All I have to do is drive 150 miles to claim my prize. Will I do it? Probably not. The reason is I'm suspicious. I'm suspicious that I'll win the washer/dryer. I'm suspicious that its unique energy-efficient compact design attaches a washboard to a clothes line. You've heard the saying before, "There's no such thing as a free lunch."

This is a message from the Gospel today. Last week we heard how Jesus multiplied the loaves and fed the crowd; this week we see the crowd following him for more food, and this is the message Jesus gives them, "Look, there's no such thing as a free lunch. There is a catch." In effect, he says, "The bread I gave you was to grab your attention that what you really hunger for is spiritual food, and that food is me. I am the bread of life."

OK, but it's still free food, so what's the catch? The catch is in this question: "What is this bread for?" Is it for **our** nourishment? Yes and no. Yes, it nourishes us, but it doesn't stop there. It transforms us into bread for the world. This is the catch--If we eat this bread, we will **become** this bread. Our faith will nourish the world.

How do we do that? All kinds of ways you're familiar with. How you raise a family, how we treat our friends, how we set business policies. And with elections coming up so close, it's good to remember that our faith will inform the choices we make for our community in the voting booth.

I'll give you one example about the Catholic vote. Politicians who woo Catholics will often advertise themselves as pro-life candidates. Then as proof they show their voting record on abortion-related issues. But a pro-life candidate is more than an anti-abortion candidate. A true pro-life candidate opposes the death penalty. A true pro-life candidate favors arms reduction. A true pro-life candidate favors care for the needy. In short, a true pro-life candidate is rare. This is one reason why as a Church we do not endorse candidates. But we do urge people to vote, and to vote with an informed faith.

We Christians do not follow Jesus simply to get faith, we follow Jesus to share faith. If we eat the bread of life, then we become bread for the world.