

I'll bet I can name three things you're tired of. The first is the presidential campaign. Most people got tired of all the news coverage and all the ads. Regardless of what you think of George Bush, you're probably glad the campaign is over. Regardless of what you think of Dan Quayle, you're probably glad he's not making headlines. In fact, everyone seems perfectly happy that in the last two months, there have been more documented sightings of Elvis Presley than of Dan Quayle.

There's a second thing I'll bet you're tired of: Leftover turkey. Thanksgiving is a magnificent holiday, so deep in meaning. Our tables are piled high with God's bounty, but even God's bounty can overstay its welcome. Every year we pray, "Thank you Lord for this food, and may the calories and carbohydrates not have dominion over us." We respect God's bounty, and we will not waste our food, even if it means getting tired of leftover turkey.

The third thing you may be tired of--already--is Christmas. Preparing for Christmas is exhausting even at this stage. Already people are getting tired of shopping, tired of ads.

Meanwhile, in the Catholic Church, we're just beginning Advent. We don't start Christmas for another four weeks--an impossible time for celebration if we're all tuckered out.

Why is it we tire of things so quickly? I think it's a problem of hope. We all hope for something which will make a difference. Maybe the election will bring a change in our economy; maybe Thanksgiving will bring a change in our family. Maybe this Christmas will revive my faith. We keep hoping for something which will satisfy, and too often our hopes turn to dust.

In today's Gospel we hear from Luke the last words Jesus spoke publicly before his passion. It's his final speech to the crowds he loved. What does he say? He says, "Don't let your spirits be bloated, for the Son of Man is coming again." Don't let your spirits be bloated.

Now, this weekend, many of us have a very real and present recollection of what it's like to feel bloated, but bloated in body. Jesus warns about being bloated in spirit.

So here's the question--what food do you feed your spirit? Is it the food, for example, of entertainment? Now, I'm emphasizing "too much" here--Some people bloat their spirits on too much entertainment: Too much television, too much sports, too much culture--in order to avoid deepening their relationships with people. Do you feed your spirit the food of drugs? Some people bloat their spirits on drugs and alcohol to avoid confronting themselves. Do you feed your spirit the food of greed? Some people bloat their spirits with self-satisfaction, and never reach out to the needy.

We bloat our spirits on things we hope will satisfy, but in the end, we grow tired of them, like so much leftover turkey. The food of joy, let's feed our spirits foods which give life. This Advent, let's feed our spirits the food of peace, the food of generosity. These foods cost nothing, and they can feed thousands. Frazzled shoppers need the food of peace. People who lost a loved one this year need the food of love. These foods feed the spirit, and we'll never grow tired of them. A2 Regis 26-27.xi.88