

04-19-2009 Homily

In Richmond, Ind., where I was raised, nothing was more predictable than what we ate: chicken, pork, hamburger, macaroni, canned tuna or spaghetti. That was it, unless you splurged and went to Cincinnati. But even there, we usually ordered chicken, pork, hamburger, macaroni, tuna or spaghetti.

Someone told us people on the west coast ate squid. The very thought was nauseating. Once we moved here, we saw squid on the menu. None one ever tried it. We hoped we wouldn't see it. Till one day, someone invited me to their house and served something delicious. Do you know what it was?

I wasn't going to learn about calamari by words. Like finicky kids whose moms have to make them try new things, I had to take a taste.

For which reason the psalm says: Taste, and see how good the Lord is! Like Shakespeare, red wine, and much classical music ... God is for many an acquired taste. People think they know who God is and what God tastes like ... so they don't try any more. They need to be led to taste.

Thomas was one of these special learners. With him, words that Jesus was alive weren't enough. He had to touch Jesus. (I understand that. I'm very much a tactile learner and one thing I love about European museums is that they let you touch the old statues. There's a connection I feel by touching that doesn't come otherwise.

I'm talk about learning by eyes, by your ears ... but especially learning through taste and touch ... because Sacred Heart has a parish mission coming up. Parish Missions are special gatherings where we're given the opportunity to hear, see, touch and taste the risen Lord. Our presenter is Fr. Patrick Dooling, who has a special way of helping people taste and touch God. You'll all get a chance to meet him and hear him at English Masses next week.

We Catholics move heaven and earth to see that little kids make contact with Jesus for first penance and first communion. I'm glad. But I'm sorry to see that sometimes that's as far as the religious seeing, hearing, touching and tasting go. You'd feel sorry if someone's taste for wine, for food, for music, for literature ... never grew past 3rd grade. We just can't be adults who leave off Jesus when there's so much more to him and the life he offers.

In baskets by the doors are these little cards: "Taste and See how good God Is" ... and information about the coming mission. I hope you take one for yourself ... and I hope you take several to pass around, especially to non-practicing Catholics or unchurched people. Through music, words, the community around you, witness talks and benediction, I can swear ... if you're open ... you'll be touched.

The risen Jesus Christ is entering a large locked room called Cislini Youth Center. Don't be like Thomas, not present the first time, and miss out. Jesus is infinitely better than Calamari. Taste and see how good the Lord is!