

Sealed in the Father's Image Third Week of Easter Monday, May 6, 2019 Acts
6:8-15; **Jn 6:22-29** (Signs point beyond what we know.)

“Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you eat the loaves and were filled.”

So this brings up the issue of: well, **what are signs? The loaves were signs**, but he is saying you didn't see the signs, you ate the loaves. When I was in Bulgaria I saw all kinds of signs; I had no idea what they meant, so they were not signs for me; I don't read Bulgarian. The loaves were signs, **but not for this group**. They didn't read the sign because **it's a sign of food that endures for eternal life, but they ate it as food that perishes**. It's very important that we get into this distinction.

What is the reason for miracles? **Miracles are signs of the transcendent purposes of God leading us beyond our own vision**. Now many times people want miracles because they are desperate. Without a miracle they are going to lose their mortgage. Without a miracle they are going to die of the disease. Without a miracle their lives are going to be over. But that isn't actually what a miracle is for. **It's not to remedy people who are desperate so that their lives can keep going**. Miracles are signs of something altogether greater, richer, more beautiful, more wholesome, more healthy than just ordinary life as we know it. So that's the idea of a sign—beyond. **Signs point beyond what we know**. So when we want a miracle so that life as we know it can keep going, that's not the right idea. Miracles happen, but they are to lead us beyond life as we know it. These people didn't get the sign. They wanted more food. They wanted more bread. But this was the bread that perishes.

What the Son of Man offers is bread that leads to eternal life; that's the bread of the Eucharist. And I will point out that many Christian churches full of real believers do not have this

bread, because one of the sad things about the history of our faith is that **many have thought it merely symbolic and so they have dismissed it** as an important component to the life of the disciple or to the life of the community of discipleship, better way to put it. So we have all around the world Christians baptized into Christ, listening to the word of God, but not being fed the bread that leads to eternal life **and, therefore, really handicapped in the transformation that God intends**. And, by the way, **there are many people that come to a valid, authentic Eucharist but don't receive it in any sort of way that helps them grow**. They receive it mechanically. They receive it distractedly. They are not paying attention. They are not focused. They are not reverent and, therefore, **they do not benefit as they might if they would simply come with humility and reverence and prayerfulness**.

Here Jesus says—speaking of himself in the third person, the Son of Man, that's saying me but in the third person—**“For on him the Father, God, has set his seal.”** Now that means that he is like the Father. A seal had the image and it was pressed into wax or lead so you knew who sent the letter. **Jesus is the Father's letter, and he is sealed with the Father's image. We are supposed to be sealed also by the Holy Spirit in the Father's image.**