

Saint Thomas' and St Thomas' of the Air Church
 Trinity VII
 July 19, 2026
 rmceely+

“nourish us with all goodness”
 “what fruit had ye then in those things whereof you are now ashamed”
 “So they did eat and were filled”

Words from today's Collect, Epistle and Gospel, respectively.

If it occurred to you
 that the church is directing us
 toward nutrition today
 I think you would not be far wrong.
 But perhaps not in the way you might have expected.

Nutrition seems to have captured the airwaves these days.
 We get a seemingly endless stream
 Of advertisements, blogs, podcasts, books, TV talk shows
 Infomercials and magazines
 that profess breakthroughs and new ways to eat
 that will cure almost every ailment
 and problem known to mankind
 From the common cold
 To aging, weight gain and weight loss
 To disease
 To our mortality.
 It seems as though every week
 some new clinical study has been completed
 touting the medicinal benefits of some miracle food.
 Some nutritional prevention of death itself.

While it is not my purpose today to denigrate nutritional science,
 I point out the great extent that we go to for our physical health.

But ask; “what measures do we take for our spiritual health?”

Jesus' feeding miracles show us a number of important things.
He first cared for the Jews in the feeding of the 5,000
And then demonstrated that
 He came for the salvation of the Gentiles and for all people,
 in the feeding of the 4,000.

In the feeding miracles.
He gave them and gives us a preview of the Communion;
 That Close union with God
 When He took
 Gave thanks
 Broke the bread
 And gave it to His disciples to administer to the people.
On the surface, we see His compassion for the people
 Who had traveled long and far to hear Him.

He satisfied their physical need
 And filled their stomachs. Yes

But under the surface there was more.
 Jesus fed their souls
 With the miracle that took place right before their eyes;
 Right as the basket was passed to their hand
 And the bread miraculously multiplied,
 It was tangible and undeniable evidence that
 Jesus was everything He said He was.

You could believe all that He said.

 You could trust Him,
 Put your faith in Him.
 Open your heart and soul to Him.

You could let the love of God pour into your heart,
 let the love of God nourish your soul.

A year later, in that Upper Room on the night in which He was betrayed
 He repeated the miracle.

But this time with an eternal twist:
 He took bread
 And when He had given thanks
 He brake it
 And gave it to His disciples again
 But this time He said
 This is my body.
 Do this in re-membrance of Me.
 This time the miracle again took place in their hand
 And right before their eyes
 But this time
 He became the bread
 This time
 The miracle was perpetual
 This time
 He did not fill their stomachs
 He filled their hearts and souls
 This time
 He opened the door to the pathway
 That led from mankind to God.
 This time
 He poured loving nutrition
 into the soul of mankind.

St Paul develops the argument he made last week in today's Epistle.
 Last week, you no doubt recall,
 Paul asserted that we become new people
 in our baptism
 and in the sacrament of absolution
 With the forgiveness of our sins.

He analogized the immersion of baptism:
 As we rise from the waters,
 free from sin to being born again;
 Newly created beings, like newborn babes.

Without a spot of sin.

This week, in the verses that actually follow those of last week, Paul says; before we were slaves to sin

Now we are new persons of God,
He asks, ‘What fruit did we have when we were slaves to sin
That we are not ashamed of now?’

Was there any beneficial nutrition

Imparted by our sinful behaviour?

Was there any benefit to our souls, our bodies or our hearts

Imparted by our sins?

I can’t think of any in my case.

Paul points out; now that we are servants or slaves of God

The fruit, the benefit or nourishment of our souls

Is holiness and righteousness

And the inevitable fruit of that kind of life in this world,

Is eternal life in the next.

He sums up:

For the wage of sin is death

But the gift of God

Is eternal life

Through Jesus Christ.

So if we are to care for the health of our souls

What should we feed it?

to nourish

and improve it in this life?

And what is it that we should avoid,

for our soul’s health

in this life

To help assure eternal life with God in the next?

Part of the answer you are fulfilling right now.

You are here

In this Holy House of God

This little oasis of worship

In a desert of emptiness

Miraculously located on the street named for

His sacrament.

We are here

In worship

In fulfillment of Our Lord's

Command and advice

To pray, To love God

To love each other as Christ loves us.

We are here

And in a few moments

Will spiritually receive the sacrament

That Jesus commanded:

The Holy Eucharist

The Body and Blood of Christ

That feeds our souls

That washes our souls

With His most precious blood.

We are here to join with Him

In the eternal sacrifice

When we join our sacrifice and oblation

With His

In the eternal communion: that close union with God

Most of us have been joined with Him

In that other sacrament

That Jesus commanded:

Our baptism

We are here to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest
 His holy word
 The scripture of His inspired word
 The owner's manual of our lives.
 For the care and feeding of our souls

In the world outside these doors
 We find another kind of nutrition for our souls
 The opportunity by the way we live our lives
 To be a witness, for all to see, of God's love.
 In a time when most others don't,
 We have an opportunity to demonstrate
 The meaning and value of a life with Christ
 Each time we offer a prayer for each other
 For the stranger in need
 For the person who seems not to know the love of Christ
 Each time you take time
 and make an effort
 for another creature of God
 Each time you do God's will
 You do God's work
 And without intending to do so
 You feed your soul.

In Cranmer's prayer this morning, the Collect, we pray:
 "Nourish us with all goodness"

Now, if those are some of the things that feed our souls
 What, for our soul's nutrition,
 For our soul's health
 should we avoid? What must we not come near?
 Just as there are foods that are detrimental to the health of our bodies:
 Poisons
 Excesses
 Food that is detrimental to our body's health

There are elements of our lives that are detrimental to the health of our souls

That we must also avoid.

In our ever-growing cosmopolitan society we must recognize that

The evil one is at work every day

Working to bathe us in evil

With crime

With pride

With ingratitude

With rudeness

With selfishness

With lust

With hate

With prejudice.

I used to think these things did not effect me directly

That they were benign.

But I have changed my mind about that.

I now firmly believe

That the evil in our world

Is dangerous to our soul's health.

The works of the devil in our lives

Can pollute our souls every time it touches us.

Every time we encounter the works of evil,

It leaves a harmful scar upon our soul.

People who work in law enforcement

Something of which I know only a little

Seem to have to resist

Becoming like the people from which it is their job to separate us

It is as if the evil rubs off or is contagious.

The sin in our lives

Principally our own sin

But to a lesser degree the sin of others

Is like a tarnish
That weakens
And prevents the light of God from shining
Upon
And through us.
From us back out into the world.

The things that seem little and trivial
Have a cumulative effect
And are harmful to our soul's health

We have become accustomed to the nudity
And lascivious behavior
From Hollywood
From much of the entertainment industry
From the media

We are bombarded with advertising
That contains immoral content
And we think we are unaffected by it
But with each sensory attack
Our souls are harmed

In a very small way
The worst part is that we have become numb to them
Even accepting them as just a part of life
Assuming their character is benign
or worse,
harmless.

But I have come to believe that each assault
Leaves behind a tiny spot of tarnish on our souls

If you stop to consider the number of times we are assaulted each day
I think we would be shocked at their cumulative effect.

I know that in today's world this sounds "prudish"
Is that because

The evil one wants us to ignore it?
 I encourage you only to consider the proposition
 And judge for yourself
 And for your own soul
 The degree to which you are harmed.

The antidote for all this is, of course
 The sacraments
 Communion, which washes our souls
 Feeds our souls
 Absolution, which removes the tarnish
 And allows the light of God to shine.

It is prayer
 It is being here
 It is the word of God.
 It is the love of God
 Our love of God and for each other
 In short all the things that nourish our souls
 Are the same things
 that defeat the impacts of the evil upon our souls.

In Cranmer's Collect for today we pray:
 "And of thy great mercy
 Keep us in the same" (in all goodness)
 So if those are among the things we must do and not do for our soul's
 health,
 What is left?

We must be among the 4000
 Following Christ in this wilderness
 Hearing His words
 Feeling His thoughts
 Loving God as He loves us
 Loving our neighbor in Christian Love

Being nourished
We must sit down in this place as they did
 In this Holy House of God
 And nourish our souls
 With the sacraments
 With prayer
 With the love of God
 And with the Christian love we share among ourselves.

You know, the only things we take from this world
 into the next
 Is our soul and our love.
So, the health of our souls is important.

Our souls are challenged in this world.
They are under attack
They need to be cleansed from time to time.
Our souls need to be nourished
The question this morning is:
 Are we doing all
 That we should
 To care for and nourish
 Our immortal souls?

