

## GLIMPSE

### What's for Lunch?

Fr. Larry Gillick, S.J.

More than several times I have been late for lunch in our community's dining room. Upon meeting several of my Jesuit brothers out in the hall, I have asked them "What's for lunch?" Their spontaneous answer is that they forgot. They just finished and they just forgot! Did they eat lunch or drop it on the floor? I could tell by their cheery attitude that they did eat something, especially from the cookie tray positioned to tempt all departees. Our cook prepared it and placed it in the warmers, the food was consumed and bodily energy appropriated.

Did the consumers appreciate, taste and enjoy the meal? Who's to judge? I do know that the men did leave happy and fuller than when they arrived and they could go back to their ministries with the caloric-energy the meal provided, even if they could not remember exactly the taste or nature of the food taken in. The meal did happen, even though attentiveness and presence to what the meal consisted in were absent. Maybe what the men were talking about, about whom they were speaking were more interesting and perhaps more energetic in the long run than the actual food digested. The intent of the cook was to prepare nourishing and tasty food. The consumers took it in and went on their way, perhaps not even thankful for the food, the cook and the benefactors as well. Now, I admit that I am often equally fed and equally inattentive to what I am eating. There is always something else being taken in; a good conversation, my own thoughts or day-dreamings or just plain trying to figure out life's meal.

Conversations can take place and upon ending I find it difficult, often, to recall exactly what the subject or even object of the interchange was. I might have been there physically, but my mind was elsewhere. There was actually a speaking going on and some kind of listening as well. I can remember quite a few important conversations, usually centered around myself of course, but that would be less than one hundredth of a percentage of all my conversations. I can remember some great meals, but not so much for the food as the context, the celebration, and the people around the table. Whether I was attentive, present, receptive, grateful for

these meals and conversations, they did take place and they all had some effect on me even though I was not aware of them. We are fed many ways and we are often unable to appreciate how they are happening even while they are happening.

Here's a good question. Does the food taste better and does the food have a deeper effect, if the cook really desires it? Does the food have more healthy effects if the cook hovers over the stove constantly and is sincere in his/her desires for the good meal? It might help a bit, but the stove or oven does the cooking and the cook makes sure it all happens.

When the priest celebrates a sacrament how attentive, how deeply does he feel, desire, make the sacrament happen? How attentive and deeply involved do the recipients of those sacraments have to be to make the sacrament happen? The Sacraments happen, because they are not dependent on our emotional or intellectual involvement in their celebration. The Divine Cook has prepared and presented the Sacraments, because that is who the Divine Cook is. As with lunches or dinners or conversations, reception and effects of what is received is secondary. I might remember, I might really be present to what exactly and mysteriously is going on, but maybe not. The Sacrament is still present, received and lived-with and that is the important reality.

Those distributing the Eucharistic Bread often notice the different manners in which the recipients receive. Some are quite devout; others are preoccupied with carrying babies or looking around at other people or areas of the church. As with the lunches, dinners, even breakfasts, the attentiveness and state of prayerful gratitude is a desired consciousness, but God's Grace depends on God's infinite care. Walking out of the liturgy of any of the Sacraments, the effects in our lives are the more important reality. The homily might not have affected us, but the Grace is received whether we remember that at the time of reception or not. Obviously it is definitely helpful to know what we are eating, at lunch, knowing our hungers, being thankful for the cookies and for the gifts of the Sacraments as we are receiving them. The Divine Cook continues preparing Sacred Tasties for us and does not hold back even when we do. It is only a glimpse, keep your hands and souls attentive, even for the crumbs.

