

“Do not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life...”

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, in the 50's, there was a Broadway musical called 'Damn Yankees.' Later, it was made into a popular movie by the same title.

The leading character was a middle-aged man named Joe Boyd. From the time he was a kid, Joe dreamed of being a famous baseball player. Now, his baseball-days are over, but his dream continues. One night something strange happens. A man named Mr. Applegate walks into Joe's life. He tells Joe that he has the power to make Joe's life-long dream come true. He can turn Joe Boyd, the middle-aged man, into Joe Hardy, a 22 year old, star outfielder for the Washington Senators, a 50's, American League team.

*Then comes the really fantastic part: Joe cannot only star for the Senators, **BUT**... also lead them to a pennant over the world-famous New York Yankees! The question in Joe's mind is: who is this mysterious Mr. Applegate? Well, as you may have guessed, he is not an angel, **BUT** the devil –in human form!*

It is then that Joe learns that there is a 'catch' to all this. In exchange for stardom ...he must sell his soul to the devil.

Well, to make a long story short, Joe finds the offer impossible to refuse. So, he agrees to it with one condition: that he can 'back out' of the agreement, if he wishes, just before the Senators cinch the pennant race.

The devil figures that once Joe gets that far, he'll never 'back out,' ...and the devil agrees.

So-o, Joe writes a short note, kisses his sleeping wife good-bye, and leaves home to begin his new life as a 22-year-old, baseball star. Now, the real excitement begins.

Joe joins the Senators as a rookie and becomes an overnight sensation. In a matter of weeks, he becomes the 'toast' of Washington, D.C.

Fans cheer him wildly. Kids idolize him. Teenage girls worship him. Old folks think of him as the son or grandson they've always wanted.

Life is good ...so-o good for Joe. It's an unbelievable existence... and Joe relishes every moment of it. He never dreamed life could be so sweet. He never dreamed the world could be so beautiful.

BUT, as things progress, something unexpected happens to Joe. Slowly, all the fame and fortune begin to grow stale. Joe finds himself staring at the wall of his room at night. **Deep down inside, there's a hollow spot that the fame and fortune won't fill ...can't fill.**

And-Joe-doesn't-know-why.

Be that as it may, the deadline-date with the devil arrives. The prospects of a Pennant and a World Series are in the air. It is then, after much soul-searching, that Joe does what he never dreamed he'd do. He cancels his deal with the devil!

Why? What made him give up his childhood dream? What made him suddenly come to his senses, you ask.

Well, I am glad you asked that question!

It's because, in the end, the fictional-Joe Boyd agreed, 100%, with what Jesus says to the crowd in today's Gospel, which I just read to you from St. John:

*“Do not work for food that perishes, **BUT** for food that endures for eternal life...
I am (that) bread of life;
whoever comes to me will never hunger...
and whoever believes in me ...will never thirst.”*

You see, what Jesus is saying, and what Joe Boyd discovered before it was too late, can be summed up in one sentence:

The human heart has a hunger/ & a thirst that can never be satisfied by anything on earth.

*It is a lesson we must learn –if we are to ever find true happiness! Fame and fortune promise to fill the void in the human heart ...**but**, they leave it more hungry and more thirsty than it was before. In and of themselves, they may be fine. **BUT**, they cannot fill the void!*

*In a few minutes, we will share, together, the **Bread of Life**. I will take a simple piece of bread and, through the power of the priesthood given at the Last Supper, I will change that bread to God, making it Jesus, called the **Real Presence**. I will immediately raise that consecrated bread to God for all in the room to see, offering Jesus to his Father ...as surely as he was offered on Golgotha Hill 2,000 years ago for the atonement of sin --from Adam's to ours. Then, only minutes after that, we will receive that **sacrifice** in Communion, that is, in **sacrament**!*

And people ask ...why would anyone want to be a priest. Well, I've just told you why!

I now close with this brief prayer:

*“Heavenly Father-Abba, give us your grace to never forget what Joe Boyd discovered:
that food & drink of this world can never satisfy the hunger & thirst of the human heart.
Give us the grace to never forget the great truth ...that our hearts were made for you and, as St. Augustine asserted so many centuries ago, they will not rest until they rest in Thee. For, to forget this truth,
is to lose sight of the key to true happiness and one of the most important things Jesus ever taught
when he said: ‘I am ...the Bread of Life!’ ”*

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.