

## Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B (January 15, 2012)

Last Easter I wanted to do something special for the family Mass, so I decided to make a lamb cake – yes, a lamb cake – to use as a visual aid while talking about Jesus as the Lamb who gave his life out of love for all people. It was a noble idea, one that kept me in the kitchen attempting to follow a recipe. Baking, it seems, is a science, and a very precise one at that, and I was never very good in science. Making the cream cheese frosting was a breeze; the frosting was unbelievably delicious.

I got a lamb mold from Amazon, an industrial strength heavy metal mold. I filled it with the quasi cake batter and waited. Once it was done, the cake actually looked like a lamb but the back end was a bit missing, something I would solve with frosting as filler. I frosted the cake after it cooled – yes, I waited until it cooled. And then it happened: the head fell off since the frosting was so heavy, and the rest of the cake just sort of fell apart. I couldn't use the lamb cake for the homily.

I thought of this lamb cake endeavor when I heard the first words of the Baptist, pointing out Jesus as the "Lamb of God," a title that caused the disciples to stop, think, and then follow Jesus. He "calls," at any time and any place to follow him into a new way of life....and he calls as we are: a work in progress, much like my lamb cake...I am determined to make a *bona fide* and eatable lamb cake.

And like that lamb cake, Jesus takes us as we are: sometimes our lives seem just like that cake, dry and somewhat unformed, lacking purpose and definition; sometimes, we just can't seem to get it together and we experience our lives like a collapsed cake. Yes, we are all works in progress and Christ takes us just as we are.

His call is to be engaged in a relationship with him and it is from this intimate relationship that we see the contours of our lives. It is from within the relationship that we discover our life's calling. Unfortunately, we get it backwards, the cart before the horse, so to speak. We want to know what God wants from us and what he wants us to do with our lives before we have a deep and abiding relationship with him. When the disciples ask Jesus where he lives, he never responds directly but just asks them to come and see. What compels them is the title "lamb of God" and his loving gaze. It is clear that to enter into a relationship with Christ demands a new way of living...a new life. This is symbolized when he gave Simon a new name, the name "Peter" which means "rock." Peter was hardly rock-like in his discipleship and he frustrated Jesus so many times.

But Jesus takes us as we are...works in progress...beautiful works of human art that become more formed and defined each time we listen to his call. And his call is never just once and for all but daily in the many voices we hear from loved ones, co-workers, acquaintances, and strangers. God is as consistent with us as he was with Samuel, whom he kept calling until the call sunk through; the name Samuel means, "one who listens."

May we open our ears to hear God calling us in this very liturgy, through Word and Eucharist. And this call is asking us to *trust* in where we are being led. As I filled the heavy cake mold, we are asked to be filled with the very love of Christ, a love that shapes us into the very presence of Christ...so that we resemble the Lamb who gave everything out of Love.