



Reflections on 'The Greater Things'

August—September 2025

Faith On Fire!
'Greater Things' Luncheon
Saturday 8-23-25
9:30 to 1

**BE
TRANSFORMED**
JESUS DESIRES TO HEAL
Speaker - Father Dan Hoffman



Reflections is published by:

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The office is generally open limited hours.
Please call before coming.

The purpose of this newsletter is to proclaim
the power and Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to
provide teaching, news, and calendar of events,
which help to foster Holy Spirit-filled Renewal
throughout the Diocese of Erie.

This newsletter may be copied to put in
churches or shared with others.

CHIEF EDITOR
Jacqueline Phillips-Sabot, PhD

MEDIUM WELL-DONE PLEASE! - by Jacqueline Sabot, PhD

Who doesn't love a great piece of bread? I know I do. But what do I love more than bread? A nice hot thick juicy medium well-done STEAK!!

My grandparents had a dairy farm when I was a kid and we always had plenty of steak. We made steak on the grill in all kinds of weather. It was great, yet some of the best steak I have ever had was in Texas. They really pride themselves on their steak! I could be wrong, but I am convinced that heaven must look at least a little bit like Texas.

Sometimes when people want to go out to eat, I am thinking "I want to go to Texas Roadhouse for a good steak." I quietly pray for steak instead of pasta. If we go and eat pasta, I think to myself, "this is good, but it's not steak." You get the point.

Thinking about steak recently led me to contemplate the Israelites in the desert. They liked meat also! They were in the desert. They had no food and God provided this miraculous heavenly bread for them. I think we all tend to focus on the manna and how wonderful that manna was. Each day God provided just enough manna to meet their daily needs. Except on the day before the Sabbath when He provided enough for two days so they didn't have to gather on the Sabbath. It could not have been a more wonderful provision. Except for one thing. *They missed their meat!* And I kind of get that.

Every year for the past 12 years, during Holy Week, I attempt to take on a fast of only bread from Palm Sunday until after the Easter Vigil. It's a week of only bread. What's so hard about that?? It's pretty much the diet of the Israelites in the desert. Well, the problem is that I am a spoiled baby because, let me tell you... I FIND IT HARD!

It's not hard because I am going hungry because I am not. It's hard because I get sick of bread by the third day. It's hard because I know what steak tastes like. And chocolate. And even pasta! One year I got so grumpy by Holy Saturday that I thought I was going to have to break the fast before the Vigil just so that I could be around people. But I did survive and once I got to the church, I was not grumpy. While some people in the world would be overjoyed to eat good bread everyday, this is a hard fast for me because I am like the Israelites. Before my fast, I have plenty of meat available. I fondly remember the taste and the texture and I can almost smell it.

Part of the problem with having such wonderful steak is that, like the Israelites, while longing for the steak, I completely miss the blessing of the bread. Are you starting to relate more to the Israelites yet? I hope so.

The Israelites longed for their plates full of steaming hot juicy steak (aka fleshpots). Like me, they got tired of just bread, even if it was

miraculous bread sent by God. And what did they do? They complained! I am not necessarily a good faster. I have been known to grumble, even if it's only to myself.

"The rabble with them began to crave other food [this likely would have been me. How about you?], and again the Israelites started wailing and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!'" Numbers 11:4-6, NIV [apparently they also liked a good salad!]

When we want more than God provides, like the Israelites, a lot of the time, we complain. We complain so easily in this country, don't we? We complain about *everything*. In the winter it's too cold, even though God provides houses with heat. In the summer it's too hot and humid, even though most have AC and fans and the beautiful Peninsula. If we are single, we want to be married. If we are married, sometimes people think they would have been better off single. If we have a job, we want a better job. Whatever we are getting paid, we want more. We complain about our spouses, our friends, our children, the waiter, the grocery clerk, the traffic, ... the food, etc., etc., etc. Complain. Complain. Complain. May God forgive us. Truly.

In the midst of my longing for meat during my bread fast, I missed the blessing of the wonderful bread. Just like the Israelites, when we complain about so many things in our lives so easily, we render ourselves completely unable to see the full extent of the blessings God provides... and the devil dances. The devil loves ingratitude to God. He dances when we fail to see, acknowledge, and trust in God.

I love this verse from Habakkuk. "Though there be no cattle in the stalls, **YET WILL I praise the Lord.**" This verse reflects spiritual maturity. Like Paul, Habakkuk recognized that God deserved his praise during times of surplus and during times of when he had nothing. And despite Job's troubles, he could say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the Name of the Lord." He was at peace even in his hardship because He trusted that all of it was within the will of God. Paul, Job, and Habakkuk knew that it was better to trust the Lord and starve rather than to complain against God's plan and provision. Paul said. *"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."* Phil 4:11-13, NIV, emphasis added. The secret Paul knew was that when he praised God gratefully

in times of difficulty, God gave him the strength to endure times of terrible trials.

God doesn't say not to ask. We can ask. Especially in our need. But before we ask, we need to give thanks. "With thanksgiving, present your needs to God." First comes thanks. We need to be genuinely grateful for the blessings of God.

For a long time it has struck me how that little complaint in the desert was memorialized in the Bible. And not just once, but several times. And not just in the old testament, but in the new. Have you ever heard this verse? *"If today you hear His voice harden not your heart."* This passage is repeated several times in the Bible. In Hebrews we are warned against sinning by grumbling and complaining as the Israelites did. We are also reminded that things did not go well for the Israelites who complained. God gave them so much of the thing that they desired that it killed them. They literally died with the meat of the quail between their teeth. But much worse than that, they did not enter into the promised land (heaven).

"See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end." ¹⁵ As has just been said:

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." [16]
Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Heb 12 NIV.

There can be no doubt that God is not pleased with the grumbling and complaining of His people and I am ashamed at how often I fail in this regard. Just like the Israelites, when I complain, I am focused on what I don't have, instead of the IMMENSE blessing of all that I do have... [and the devil dances]. May God forgive me (and you also).

Holy Spirit, I pray that You would assist me (and you too) in becoming a person who focuses on blessings. Weak as I am, I pray to be able to say with Habakkuk; *"Though there be no [fill in the blank], YET WILL I PRAISE THE LORD!"* Dear brothers and sisters, in the most difficult seasons of my life, if I have been able to live by this verse, the very real presence and appreciation of God has never failed to amaze me.

May God continue to richly bless all of you!

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 9:30 to 1

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JESUS DESIRES TO HEAL

Speaker - Father Dan Hoffman



Saint Joseph Bread of Life Center
 147 West 24th St, Erie

Early Bird \$12.50 until 8/13

Regular \$14.00 by 8/19

10.00 [no lunch option] online or at the door



Father Dan Hoffman
 Parish priest at Saint Titus, spiritual
 father, pastor and shepherd, spiritual
 director, certified in Canon Law, beloved
 son of the Father, disciple and brother
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*Spirit-Filled
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**August 12 - Fr David Renne
 October 7 - Fr Schreiber**

St Joe - Bread Of Life - 147 W 24th - Erie

Worship 6:15pm Mass 6:30 - Worship by Harmony's House



**Annual
 "Greater Things"
 Holy Spirit-filled
 Conference
 October 11th - OLP
 SAVE THE DATE**

We rely on your kind donations to evangelize!