

raising it from the dead, transforming it into the crying of an infant child named Laughter. Sarah's initial laugh was a hollow echo of a freshly dug grave. But God transformed her laughter in the ringing echo of an empty tomb.

The laughter of the Christian is an echo of angelic joy, because "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). As the prodigal's father said to

his righteously responsible older son who could not join in the laughter at the prodigal's homecoming, "We had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost, and has been found" (Luke 15:32). *LF*

ROLF JACOBSON is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. His articles on biblical theology and Old Testament interpretation have appeared in *The-*

ology Today, Interpretation, and Word and World, among other places. An earlier version of this essay was delivered on September 25, 2007 at Augsburg College as part of the Christensen Symposium lectures.

Notes

1. *The Lutherans in North America*, ed. E. Clifford Nelson, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 168. See pp. 267–71 for discussion of the schism.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

Thomas R. Decker

The fathers
had it wrong
when they said
fasting was an exercise
in discipline. From what
I can tell after one day of going
without cheese and milk, and then
blowing it completely with a turkey
pastrami sandwich at lunch, is that
fasting marks not discipline but
failure, proof positive that we
need the Lord's help in all
things, especially in
satisfying the
hunger of
the world.

THOMAS R. DECKER was born and raised in the west, served two parishes in South Dakota, and since retirement as an army chaplain in 2002 has served an urban parish in Long Beach, California. He has been a pastor in the LCMS since 1969.