

Sunday 19th August 2018
"He who eats this bread will live forever"

Reading 1: Proverbs 9:1-6
Reading 2: Ephesians 5:15-20

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 34:2-7
Gospel reading : John 6:51-58

Gospel reading: *John 6:51-58*

I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever."

Meditation:

Why did Jesus offer himself as "food and drink"? The Jews were scandalized and the disciples were divided when Jesus said "unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you." What a hard saying, unless you understand who Jesus is and why he calls himself the bread of life. The miracle of the multiplication of the loaves (John 6:3-13), when Jesus said the blessing, broke and distributed the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, is a sign that prefigured the superabundance of the unique bread of the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper. The Gospel of John has no account of the Last Supper meal (just the foot washing ceremony and Jesus' farewell discourse). Instead, John quotes extensively from Jesus' teaching on the bread of life.

In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in a thanksgiving sacrifice as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to the Creator as the giver and sustainer of life. Melchizedek, who was both a priest and king (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1-4), offered a sacrifice of bread and wine. His offering prefigured the offering made by Jesus, our high priest and king (Hebrews 7:26; 9:11; 10:12). The remembrance of the manna in the wilderness recalled to the people of Israel that they live - not by earthly bread alone - but by the bread of the Word of God (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Jesus made himself a perfect offering and sacrifice to God on our behalf

At the last supper when Jesus blessed the cup of wine, he gave it to his disciples saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Jesus was pointing to the sacrifice he was about to make on the cross, when he would shed his blood for us - thus pouring himself out and giving himself to us - as an atoning sacrifice for our sins and the sins of the world. His death on the cross fulfilled the sacrifice of the paschal (Passover) lamb whose blood spared the Israelites from death in Egypt.

Paul the Apostle tells us that "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Paul echoes the words of John the Baptist who called Jesus the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus made himself an offering and sacrifice, a gift that was truly pleasing to the Father. He "offered himself without blemish to God" (Hebrews 9:14) and "gave himself as a sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2).

The Lord Jesus sustains us with the life-giving bread of heaven

Jesus chose the time of the Jewish Feast of Passover to fulfil what he had announced at Capernaum - giving his disciples his body and his blood as the true bread of heaven. Jesus' passing over to his Father by his death and resurrection - the new Passover - is anticipated in the Last Supper and celebrated in the Eucharist or Lord's Supper, which fulfils the Jewish Passover and anticipates the final Passover of the church in the glory of God's kingdom. When the Lord Jesus commands his disciples to eat his flesh and drink his blood, he invites us to take his life into the very centre of our being. That life which he offers is the very life of God himself.

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. What does Jesus' sacrifice on the cross mean to you?
2. Have you shown your gratefulness for Jesus' sacrifice for us? What are you thankful for in your life?
3. How do you make Jesus the 'centre of your being' in your daily life?

"Lord Jesus, you nourish and sustain us with your very own presence and life-giving word. You are the bread of life - the heavenly food that sustains us now and that produces everlasting life within us. May I always hunger for you and be satisfied in you alone."

Source: www.dailyscripture.net, author [Don Schwager](#)