

20 OTB.18; Prvbs 9:1-6; Eph 5:15-20; John 6:51-58...*Being the Bread of Life! Being Jesus!*
It has been said, *“To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people just exist.”*
- Oscar Wilde

Today, Jesus wants us to truly LIVE.

The reality of Jesus is what the Father desires for us all.

And, only God lives Life to its fullest.

How can this be? A little scandalous don't you think!

At a retreat a young seminarian gave a talk on the Eucharist. He said that one of his favorite parts of seminary was to wake up early in the morning to go to chapel and meditate on the Sacred Presence. He developed his own prayer for adoration

... and receiving Eucharist:

“Jesus, I want to be you.”

What an audacious request. That we, in all our human frailty, might approach the Creator of the universe, present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, and ask to

be not just like him, or to draw near to him, ... but to actually become him!

And yet, when we process forward for Communion and hear the words spoken, *“the body of Christ”* & *“the blood of Christ,”* our *“Amen”* signifies not only our belief that the bread & wine have in fact been transformed into the sacred flesh of Jesus, **but also** that this is our own true nature & who we are called to be, *the body of Christ alive and active in our world.* **St. Augustine puts it this way:**

“If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's Table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving!

You are saying Amen' to what you are” (Sermon 272).

And this truly audacious! - You and I, a part of the Mystery of the Eucharist?

You and I, a part of God's own divinity?

This Eucharistic reality began on a hillside in Judea where Jesus astounded everyone around him ...

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven...Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you “eat” ... (the Greek words dramatically change from *esthein* (phago) – the respectable Gk verb (to eat) **to** *trogein* (trogon) [meaning to munch/crush with teeth into flesh] – this is the impolite/vulgar Gk verb [to gnaw])... *the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life. Whoever eats/trogon my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.”*

Hear the shock on many levels, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Later, ***“Many of his disciples said, “This word is unacceptable.***

How is it possible to hear this?” ...and they left.

The shocking implications are enormous. Yet, the real cause of this scandal is commented upon by Italian Scripture scholar Silvano Fausti (*Una Comunidad Lee Et Evangelio de Juan*), *“This is the radical scandal of incarnation: Jesus is Word and flesh, God and human being. Salvation comes precisely from the fact that He is at*

2 *the same time the Son of Man and the Son of God.*” His “I AM” was a claim to be God’s living Word, the real **living bread** present in that moment. That “I AM” was a word that would be rejected, bread that would be broken. (*Celebration*, 8/2018)

This claim of Jesus comes from the heart of his religious tradition

– ***God is the source of all life.***

God offers ***the bread of life*** so that humanity might share divine life: ***“The bread that I will give in my flesh for the life of the world.”*** (J. Allison, *Jesus the Forgiving Victim*)

Jesus is the SOURCE of life. Jesus is much more than manna.

Jesus is claiming to be the meeting point between God & humanity.

“Whoever eats my flesh & drinks my blood remains in me and I in him so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.”

Lady Wisdom’s banquet is still open to all who choose to partake.

Note that ...

Ephesians tells us to, ***“watch carefully how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most of the opportunity....”*** **What opportunity?**

The opportunity to truly be alive and not merely existing.

The opportunity to make a real difference in the world ... person to person.

The opportunity to ***remain*** in God’s own life – eternal life.

How do we live into this opportunity?

Again *Ephesians* says, ***“...but try to understand the will of the Lord.”*** What is the will of the Father? **It is to give life to this world in abundance, just as Jesus gives life in divine abundance.** Pope St. John XXIII said in his 1961 encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (#236), that we Christians must - ***“See. Judge. Act. Decide what can be and should be done ... to implement social justice in a particular situation.”***

In other words become aware of the need, discern how to help, and ACT!

Do you hear the echo of that prayer - “Jesus I want to be you”?

Where are the broken places?

Where can YOU/I can bring *the very power of God* into the world: healing, forgiving, sharing, empowering and building the Kingdom open & enlivened by everyone? Where can we be given as the ***Bread of Life*** for others?

At this Liturgy of the Real Presence, let us remember that the difference between eating *the Bread of Life* that Jesus gives us and ordinary bread ...is mind boggling!

When we eat the other bread that bread becomes a part of us. It enters our body and changes us (do I see some love handles out there!). But, when we eat *the Bread of Life* just the opposite happens. **It doesn’t change into us;**

we change into it. It transforms us into what it is: *the Body of Christ.*

Be audacious! Be involved! Be alive! Be *the Bread of life!* Be *Jesus!*