

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (June 14): "**He who eats this bread will live forever**" **Scripture: John 6:51-58**

51 "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." 52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "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; 54 he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. 58 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: What is the *bread of life* which Jesus offers to all who believe in him? It is first of all the life of God himself - life which sustains us not only now in this age but also in the age to come. The Rabbis said that *the generation in the wilderness have no part in the life to come*. In the Book of Numbers it is recorded that the people who refused to brave the dangers of the promised land were condemned to wander in the wilderness until they died. The Rabbis believed that the father who missed the promised land also missed the life to come. God sustained the Israelites in the wilderness with manna from heaven. This bread foreshadowed the true heavenly bread which Jesus would offer his followers.

Jesus is the "bread of life"

Jesus makes a claim only God can make: He is the *true bread of heaven* that can satisfy the deepest hunger we experience. The manna from heaven prefigured the superabundance of the unique bread of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper which Jesus gave to his disciples on the eve of his sacrifice. The manna in the wilderness sustained the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land. It could not produce eternal life for the Israelites. The bread which Jesus offers his disciples sustains us not only on our journey to the heavenly paradise, it gives us the abundant supernatural life of God which sustains us for all eternity.

The food that makes us live forever

Jesus chose the time of the Jewish Feast of Passover to fulfill 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 fulfills 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.

Do you hunger for the "bread of life"?

Jesus offers us the abundant supernatural life of heaven itself - but we can miss it or even refuse it. To refuse Jesus is to refuse eternal life, unending life with the Heavenly Father. To accept Jesus as the *bread of heaven* is not only life and spiritual nourishment for this world but glory in the world to come.

When we receive from the Lord's table we unite ourselves to Jesus Christ, who makes us sharers in his body and blood and partakers of his divine life. Ignatius of Antioch (35-107 A.D.) calls it the "one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live for ever in Jesus Christ" (*Ad Eph. 20,2*). This supernatural food is healing for both body and soul and strength for our journey heavenward.

When you approach the Table of the Lord, what do you expect to receive? Healing, pardon, comfort, and rest for your soul? The Lord has much more for us, more than we can ask or imagine. The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist or Lord's Supper is an intimate union with Christ. As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens us in charity and enables us to break with disordered attachments to creatures and to be more firmly rooted in the love of Christ. Do you hunger for the "bread of life"?

Daily Quote from the early church fathers: *Let faith confirm you*, by Cyril of Jerusalem, 315-386 A.D.

"Failing to understand his words spiritually, [the Jews] were offended and drew back, thinking that the Saviour was urging them to cannibalism. Then again in the old covenant there was the showbread. But that, since it belonged to the old covenant, has come to an end. In the new covenant there are the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation, which sanctify body and soul. For as bread corresponds to the body, so the Word is appropriate to the soul. So do not think of them as mere bread and wine. In accordance with the Lord's declaration, they are body and blood. And if our senses suggest otherwise, let faith confirm you. Do not judge the issue based on taste, but on the basis of faith **be assured beyond all doubt that you have been allowed to receive the body and blood of Christ.**

OPENING PRAYER "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 we always hunger for you and be satisfied in you alone." **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- **World and Covet19.**

Lord, Look upon the victims of Covet19 throughout the world with eyes of mercy, may your healing hands rest upon them , may your life giving powers flow into every cell of their bodies and into the depths of their souls, cleansing, purifying, restoring them to wholeness and strength for service in your Kingdom. **Amen.**