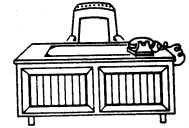


20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 19, 2018



From the Desk of
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

Sunday Reflection:

This Sunday's gospel begins with a repetition of the very last verse from last Sunday where Jesus says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (John 6:51). This constitutes the very climax of the sixth chapter of John's gospel we have been reading for the last three weeks. Since John's gospel has no account of the Last Supper, this verse represents John's version of the institution of the Eucharist.

Last Sunday, we learned that Jesus' audience murmured because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They wondered what happened to him, whether he was no longer the one they knew as the son of Mary and Joseph. Rather than toning down his rhetoric, Jesus escalates the situation by saying that the bread he will give is his flesh for the life of the world. This Sunday, his audience is beyond murmuring, they started quarreling among themselves. The situation was becoming too dangerous.

Rather than backing down, Jesus went on the offensive to say, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him." Obviously, this goes to the very core of what we believe about the Eucharist. The church teaches that during the consecration, God transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (transubstantiation). Hence, what we receive in Communion is no longer ordinary bread and wine but the body and blood of Christ.

Unfortunately, some Catholics do not believe it. Some might be inclined to say, "I don't care what the priest says, it's just a piece of bread!" Any Catholic who believes that he/she receives "just a piece of bread" in Holy Communion does not deserve to be Catholic. Think about this for a second, if Jesus did not mean what he said about his body being real food and his blood real drink, he had plenty of opportunities to rephrase it or correct himself. Rather than rephrase, he emphasized it beyond doubt. As a mystery, one does not have to understand transubstantiation in order to believe it.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote that the Eucharist is the Dynamic Presence that grasps us and makes us His Own. He used the word "fission" when explaining the Eucharist to young people at the World Youth Day. He asked rhetorically how ordinary bread becomes Jesus' Body and ordinary wine becomes his Blood. He likened it to a process of "inducing nuclear fission in the very heart of being."

In nuclear physics and chemistry, fission is either a nuclear reaction or a radioactive decay process involving the splitting of the nucleus of an atom into smaller particles, producing gamma rays and unleashing enormous amount of energy. Science teaches that one kilogram of uranium can produce as much energy as 1500 metric tons of coal. If a kilogram of uranium can give light and warmth to an entire city, imagine what God can do with us from the energy unleashed when we receive Communion. The combined energy generated in our hearts every time we receive Communion is enough to transform the whole world.

Have a great week!

Fr. Romanus