



**NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
AUGUST 9, 2021**

In the second year of the Church's 3-year cycle of readings, we pause in our readings of the Gospel of Mark to focus on St. John's mediation on the meaning of Eucharist.

The Gospel of John's "Bread of Life" discourse throughout the month of August reminds us of our greatest need, our biggest hope. We join Catholic churches everyone in a revival of the Eucharist! God does indeed fill the hungry searching soul with good things. He prepares a table for you – come, share Christ at the altar!

FIRST READING: Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15 • SECOND READING: Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

GOSPEL: John 6:24-35

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph?"

Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves.

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets:

They shall all be taught by God.

Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me.

Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.

Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died;

this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die.

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."

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Last week's Gospel ended with Jesus saying: "I am the Bread of Life come down from heaven." This week's Gospel opens with the people's response to Jesus' claim. Just like their ancestors in the desert, they engage in murmuring. They reason, "How could this man be from heaven when we know his parents?" Commenting on this Gospel, Patricia Sanchez writes:

Ironies abound in the fourth Gospel and John 6 is no exception. As we saw in last week's Gospel, there was irony in the fact that the people were seeking Jesus but did not want to follow him. They called him Rabbi, but they were not willing to be taught by him. They clamored after bread, but they did not want to be filled or fed by him.

Perhaps the saddest irony of all is the crowd, asking Jesus for some sign that would validate his claims (to be that Bread of Life) and then dismissing both Jesus and his teaching because they thought they knew him. Even the sign of the loaves and their fully-satisfied physical hunger wasn't sufficient to quell their murmuring. We know who he is, they reasoned, so how can he claim to have come down from heaven?!

Jesus states that no one can believe in him unless *drawn* by the Father. Being drawn to Jesus by God means allowing the gift of faith within oneself to grow and to respond to the One who gave it. Jesus stresses his unique relationship with the Father.

- Do you have "unique" relationships with God the Father, Christ the Son?

When Jesus speaks of himself as "bread from heaven," he is not only speaking about the Eucharist but also the bread of the truth of his teaching.

- Trust is at the root of every good relationship. Do you ever find it a challenge to take Christ at His word?
- How truly do you believe in Christ in the Eucharist and what can you do to deepen that faith?

- Who or what can cause you to feel really down? What "food" helps you to get up in such times? Who or what are "ministering angels" in your life? What feeds you spiritually?

- Catholic writer Alice Camille says: I know people who run around in circles trying to decide what they believe about Eucharist, whether or not they are worthy to receive, whether or not it's Ok to not go to the banquet every Sunday. Do any of these questions or doubts sound familiar – for you? For other Catholics you may know? How do you work out your answer?

Prayer Intentions of the Month – Pray for all those impacted by the pandemic and have yet to return to the Celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist; all those on the journey to the Eucharist (maybe for the first time or to come back after a very long time); pray for your own desire to stay strong to come to the altar to be fed spiritually.