

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time



As people in recovery, we have experienced life on the spiritual fringes. Therefore, we can praise God for keeping us within His grip throughout our journey. We put a lot of emphasis on our quest for God, discussing how and why we ought to find Him. Thankfully, we do not need detective work to encounter the Lord. God is eager to offer what He has to the world, and in our recovery from addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments, we are given an invitation to simply remain in Him.

We must turn away from our earthly perishable goods if we are to feast on the Lord's banquet. Many of us have spent our lives going from trough to trough attempting to fill up on food that spoils: power, pleasure, honor, and wealth. In Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God made flesh, we are invited to taste the Bread of Life. In this Sunday's Gospel Reading, we hear Jesus share:

*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.*

We take this literally and directly, supported by the fact that Jesus doubles down on this statement when given a chance to soften the message to a grumbling crowd. As we make a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God (Step 3), we can find no better way to be in alignment with our Lord than by remaining in Him and encountering Him in the Eucharist.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe, the patron saint of drug addicts, families, and prisoners, offers a reflection about the wonders of the Blessed Sacrament: "You come to me and unite Yourself intimately to me under the form of nourishment. Your Blood now runs in mine, Your Soul, Incarnate God, compenetrates mine, giving courage and support. What miracles! Who would have ever imagined such!" He is also credited for saying, "If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion" (From *Short Bio of Maximilian Kolbe*, Mission of the Immaculata).

Further along the Twelve Steps, we improve our conscious contact with Jesus through prayer and meditation, asking for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out (Step 11). Belief in Jesus' presence in the Eucharist moves us toward a true union with our Savior, providing strength, nourishment, and resolve on the road of recovery.

This Sunday's Second Reading offers direction and encourages gratitude:

*Therefore, do not continue in ignorance,
but try to understand what is the will of the Lord.
And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies
debauchery,
but be filled with the Spirit,
addressing one another in psalms and hymns and
spiritual songs,
singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts,
giving thanks always and for everything
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the
Father.*

Saint Paul's words to the Ephesians instruct the behavior change necessary as we make spiritual progress through recovery. These words ring true whether we are addicted to getting drunk on wine, compulsive eating behaviors, drug use, lust, gambling, technology, codependency, or other unhealthy attachments.

Our common solution is found in the Body of our King that gave us eternal life by sacrificing his own. Let us be filled with the Holy Spirit and enlightened by God's divine nourishment. We remain in Christ with gratitude and hope.

Reflection Questions

- Where do you find God?
- How do you make yourself available to receive and participate in the Lord's banquet here on earth?
- In your experience, what are the effects of encountering Jesus through the Eucharist?

August Webinar: Overcoming Shame

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Proverbs 9:1-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:15-20

Gospel: John 6:51-58