

Twenty-First Sunday of Ordinary Time-B  
John 6:60-69

Dear Friends,

This is the fifth selection from the Bread of Life discourse. In these last five weeks we have spent almost as much time as we did in Lent. The heart of the lesson is that Jesus is the revelation of God, a saving God who calls us to eternal life through Jesus. "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life." (Jn 6:63)

Today's final words of Jesus are about the need for faith, a faith open to the Spirit's call. Underlying and permeating this entire examination of the Bread of Life is the Incarnation, **"the Word made flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth."** (Jn 1:14). Jesus will return to the Father in the self-sacrificing event of his death and resurrection. To accept the wonder of this invitation into love, we need the faith to let the Spirit fill our hearts. We have before us the answer to the deepest longing in our hearts. We have before us the Bread to satisfy our deepest hunger. We have before us the call to total freedom and everlasting life. We need to join Peter's marvelous declaration, **"Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."** (Jn 6:69)

Jesus' words opened the eyes and hearts of the disciples. In proclaiming himself as the Bread of Life sent down from heaven, Jesus touched their deepest longings. They still remained confused and humble. They still longed for the clarity and the security of a better understanding. Yet they had come to the conviction and commitment to accept Jesus as **"the Holy One of God."** (Jn 6:69) Their faith had set them free to begin the pilgrimage to God by embracing Jesus as the Bread of Life.

This same challenge of accepting Jesus is ever-present in our life. It is the most basic choice that faces us as human beings. We must answer Jesus' question which is similar to his statement in Mark, **"Who do you say I am?" Mk 8:27)** We need to accept God on God's terms no matter how shocking: **"whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day."** (Jn 6:54) We need to let go of the deceitful world our common sense builds to blind us in our security and comfort. We need to embrace faith in the great and incomprehensible mystery of Jesus as the Bread of Life. He has taken flesh in our world so we may be transformed in the Spirit. Like him, our faith and commitment to walk in his footsteps will carry us through death to eternal life.

For five weeks we have seen the two sides of Jesus as the Bread of Life. He is the unveiling of the wisdom of God and the gift of love in the Eucharist. John will further expose that great gift of his body and blood at the Last Supper. In the washing of the feet, we encounter the true nature of the Eucharist. It is Jesus as God's self-gift for the life of the world. We are nourished by the flesh and blood to continue that revelation of

self-giving that Jesus has modeled for us in the washing of the feet. It is all about love leading to life for us in the service of others. It is all about love leading to our life eternal.