

Sunday Message

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 11 August 2024 • Psalter Week 3

FULLY HUMAN, FULLY DIVINE

JOHN 6:41-51



They are annoyed with Jesus, incredulous at the claims he has been making. Jesus has stated that he is the "bread that has come down from heaven."

That is simply too much for many of his listeners. After all, they know who he is. They know where he comes from. They know his mother and father. He is an ordinary Galilean, just like themselves. There is nothing special about him. And now here he is making these extraordinary claims about himself. The Jewish leaders and many of his listeners are tired of it, and they want to let Jesus know it, too.

But Jesus doesn't back down. He repeats his claim, and goes even further. He tells them that he is the bread of life. He is, he says, the living bread that comes down from heaven, and anyone who eats this bread will live forever. The bread that he gives is his own flesh, his own body and blood, for the life of the world.

It's not difficult to understand why many people found his words so difficult to accept. To the devout Jew, they sounded like sacrilege. To the casual listener, they must have sounded like the words of a crackpot.

To the unbeliever today, Jesus' words still sound astonishing. But to us who believe, they are the basis of our faith. We believe that Jesus is the bread of life, and we believe that anyone who eats this bread will live forever.

That is why we have come to Mass today, why we receive Holy Communion - we know we are receiving the bread of life himself. Today's Gospel reminds us of the wonderful gift our faith is and to never take it for granted. ■

LEARN

The Christian knows that Jesus is true God and true man.

It is never enough to think of Jesus merely as the Son of God; he is also fully human.

In the Eucharist we receive the Bread of Life, which is Christ himself.

The Eucharist strengthens us for life's journey.

DO

In his letter to the Ephesians, St Paul warns them to never hold grudges against others, or lose their temper, or raise their voice to anybody, or call each other names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. They must follow Christ by loving each other as Christ has loved them. Think about how you relate to those closest to you, your family, friends, work colleagues. How well do you treat them?

PRAY

Faith is an extraordinary gift. Thank God for the gift of faith you have received.

REFLECT

Very often in practice, Christians can deny the humanity of Christ. We can say things like, "He didn't really suffer - he was God," or "He knew everything - he was God." "It was easy for him to forgive - after all, he was God." We're so convinced of Christ's divine nature we lose sight of the truth that he was a real human person.

In today's Gospel, the opposite happens. The people, some of whom had known Jesus all his life, were so conscious of his humanity that they denied his divinity. Jesus had just told them he was the bread of life come down from heaven, and immediately they got their backs up. "Sure, he can't be. He's Joseph's son. Mary is his mother. How can he make such claims?"

Because we know that he is the Son of God, we can do the opposite of those in today's Gospel and deny Christ's humanity. It's important that we don't make that mistake, for two reasons.

First, if we deny Christ's humanity, then he has nothing to teach us about being human. If he was only pretending to be a helpless infant, or pretending to be hungry or angry or lonely or broken-hearted or in pain or dying - then that's all it was, a pretence. But the fact is Jesus was human. He became human not just to teach us about God but to show us how to be fully human - how to bear the limitations of the human condition and yet know how to love and forgive and remain faithful to God. What he was, we can be in our best moments.

Second, we need to remember the humanity of Jesus because it challenges us with the possibility of living as he lived. In today's second reading, St Paul urges us to "imitate God, as children of his that he loves, and follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place." Of course, we will never be perfect. We will fall and fail and make mistakes, but we are called to keep on striving to imitate Jesus, to love God and others as best we can. ■

SAY

"Lord, you show me how to be human. Help me to imitate you to the best of my ability. Amen."

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Look to your covenant, O Lord,
and forget not the life of your poor ones for
ever.
Arise, O God, and defend your cause,
and forget not the cries of those who seek
you.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and
daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which you have promised.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever
Amen.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 19:4-8

A reading from the first book of Kings.
Elijah went into the wilderness, a day's journey,
and sitting under a furze bush wished he were
dead. "Lord," he said "I have had enough. Take
my life; I am no better than my ancestors."
Then he lay down and went to sleep. But an
angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat."
He looked round, and there at his head was a
scone baked on hot stones, and a jar of water.
He ate and drank and then lay down again. But
the angel of the Lord came back a second time
and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, or
the journey will be too long for you." So he got
up and ate and drank, and strengthened by that
food he walked for forty days and forty nights
until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 33(34):2-9

Response:
Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 1. I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad. (R.)

- 2. Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free. (R.)
- 3. Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called, the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress. (R.)
- 4. The angel of the Lord is encamped
around those who revere him, to rescue
them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him. (R.)

SECOND READING

Ephesians 4:30 - 5:2

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Ephesians.
Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God who has
marked you with his seal for you to be set free
when the day comes. Never have grudges
against others, or lose your temper, or raise
your voice to anybody, or call each other
names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. Be
friends with one another, and kind, forgiving
each other as readily as God forgave you in
Christ.
Try, then, to imitate God, as children of his that
he loves, and follow Christ by loving as he loved
you, giving himself up in our place as a fragrant
offering and a sacrifice to God.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! If anyone loves me he will
keep my word, and my Father will love him,
and we shall come to him. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 6:41-51

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.
The Jews were complaining to each other
about Jesus, because he had said, "I am the
bread that came down from heaven." "Surely
this is Jesus son of Joseph" they said. "We
know his father and mother. How can he now
say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" Jesus
said in reply, "Stop complaining to each other.
"No one can come to me
unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me,
and I will raise him up at the last day.
It is written in the prophets:
They will all be taught by God,
and to hear the teaching of the Father,
and learn from it,
is to come to me.
Not that anybody has seen the Father,
except the one who comes from God:
he has seen the Father.
I tell you most solemnly,
everybody who believes has eternal life.
I am the bread of life.
Your fathers ate the manna in the desert
and they are dead;
but this is the bread that comes down from
heaven,
so that a man may eat it and not die.
I am the living bread which has come down
from heaven.
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and the bread that I shall give is my flesh,
for the life of the world."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of
your Church,
for in your mercy you have given them to be
offered
and by your power you transform them
into the mystery of our salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord,
who gives you your fill of finest wheat.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the communion in your Sacrament
that we have consumed, save us, O Lord,
and confirm us in the light of your truth.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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We thank you Father for the life and knowledge
which you have made known to us through
Jesus your Son. As this bread which we have
broken was once scattered on the hillside and
was gathered and became one again, so may
your Church be gathered from the ends of the
earth into your kingdom. For yours is the glory
and the power through Jesus Christ our Lord.
(The Didache 2nd century)