

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel Reading

12th August 2018

John 6:41-51

Jesus responds to the murmurs of the crowd, who wonders what he means when he says that he came down from heaven.

Background on the Gospel Reading

On this Sunday, we continue to read from the “Bread of Life discourse” found in the sixth chapter of John’s Gospel. Recall that we have been reading from this chapter for the past two weeks and will continue to read from it for another two. Last week, the crowd asked for a sign that would show that Jesus came from God. Jesus replied by saying that he is the sign and the bread of life sent by God.

At this point, our Lectionary omits six verses in which Jesus predicts the unbelief of the crowd and further develops his connection with God the Father.

In these verses, Jesus says that he was sent by God to do the Father’s will. Jesus promises that those who look upon the Son with faith will find eternal life. Some of these themes are repeated in today’s Gospel reading.

Today’s Gospel begins with a report that the Jews complained about Jesus’ claims regarding his identity. They knew his family, and they knew he was the son of Joseph. They could not comprehend what Jesus meant when he said that he came down from heaven.

Jesus responds to the complaints by saying that only those who are chosen by God will recognize him as the one that God sent. This is a recurring theme in John’s Gospel, that God has chosen those who will have faith in Jesus.

In the verses that follow, Jesus talks more

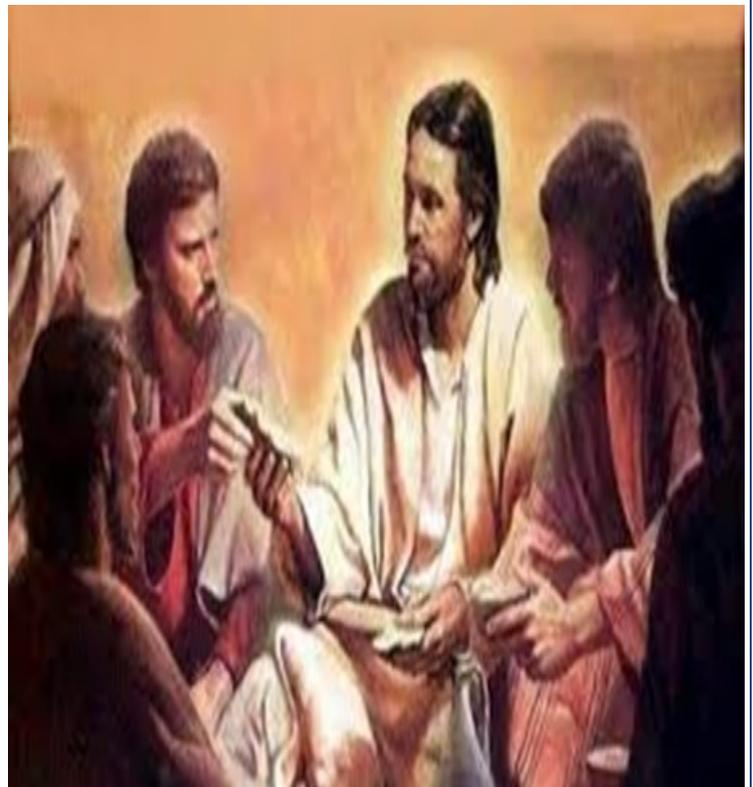
about his unity with the Father. He is the one who has seen the Father and, therefore, knows the Father. Those who listen to God will recognize that Jesus is the one sent from God. Those who believe will have eternal life.

Jesus concludes with the central element of our eucharistic theology. He promises that the bread of life will bring eternal life to those who partake of it, and he tells us that the bread of life will be his own flesh, given for the life of the world.

In today’s reading, we hear Jesus say again, as he did in last week’s Gospel, that he is the bread of life. We also hear Jesus add that he is the living bread. Both of these statements help us understand better the gift that Jesus gives us in the Eucharist.

We celebrate this gift of Jesus each time we gather for Mass. We believe that receiving Jesus in the Eucharist will lead us to eternal life.

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