

Twentieth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Gospel Reading

19th August 2018

John 6: 51-58

Jesus teaches that whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood will live forever.

Background on the Gospel Reading

On this Sunday, we continue to read from the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. Today's Gospel elaborates further on the teaching that Jesus began in our liturgy last week. In that reading, the crowds wondered about how Jesus could say that he had come down from heaven because they knew

Jesus to be the son of Joseph. In this Gospel, some have difficulty with Jesus' teaching that he is the living bread sent from God. Recall that Jesus had told them that just as God gave the Israelites manna to sustain them in the desert, so now God has sent new manna that will give eternal life.

We hear the concluding verse of last week's Gospel repeated in today's reading: Jesus himself is the bread sent by God; Jesus' flesh is the bread that is given for the life of the world.

Among the stumbling blocks for those who heard but did not understand Jesus is the teaching that the bread that Jesus will give is his own flesh.

In response to the people who quarreled over his words, Jesus teaches with even greater emphasis that salvation comes to those who eat his Body and Blood.

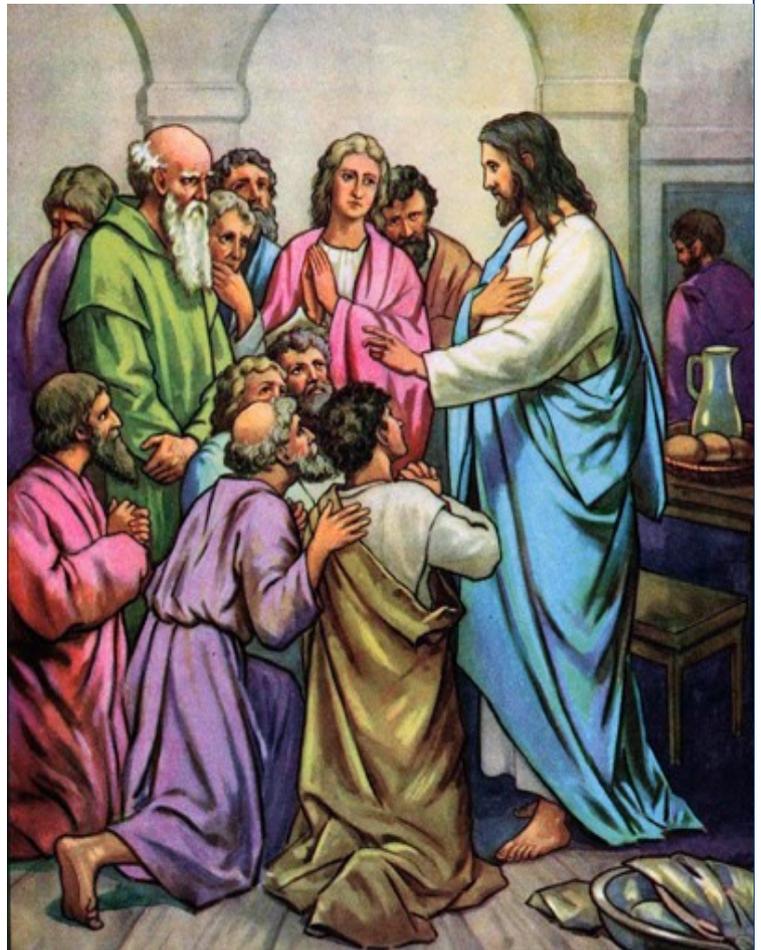
Jesus doesn't seem to answer the question posed about how salvation will come about, perhaps because this reality can only be understood after his death and Resurrection. Instead, Jesus teaches about the life that he will give to the world.

To many ears, Jesus' words are jarring and difficult to hear. Many who heard Jesus could not accept what he said. Many today continue to struggle to accept these words. But they are important words because they reveal our intimate connection with Jesus.

This is the mystery that is at the heart of our eucharistic theology. In the elements of bread and wine, Jesus' Body and Blood are made truly present.

When we share in the Body and Blood of Christ, Jesus himself comes to dwell within us. This communion with the Lord makes us one body, brings us eternal life, and sends us forth to be Christ's body for the life of the world.

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