



Bible Study Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

**St. Maria Goretti, St.
Joan of Arc, St.
Augustine and St. Peter
Claver Parishes
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**“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.
Jn. 6:56 NABRE**

Reading I Proverbs 1:1-6

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT! This phrase can be traced to its French origins in the 1800s. It surfaced in 1920 in the United States when the nutritionist, Victor Lindlahr, developed a diet which proved that diet controlled health. In essence, he proved that we are as healthy as we eat. Today, the world is filled with dietary supplements and energy drinks that provide artificial ways of losing unwanted pounds and boosting energy levels, which may be unhealthy. In ancient China, the gods are said to have eaten “peaches” they claimed made them immortal. Likewise, our eternity depends on our spiritual food on earth. We are what we eat.

The readings this week show the wisdom of feeding on the flesh of Jesus the Christ. We are what we eat. Proverbs Chapter 9 contains a symmetrical



The Table is set. The Banquet is ready.

contrast between wisdom and foolishness (folly) that began in Chapter 1. Wisdom and foolishness are given feminine characteristics, but are actually ways of life. They represent the daily choices that we make. In the verses for this Sunday, notice the parallel between wisdom’s invitation and Jesus’ invitation to us to come to His feast in Matt. 22:1-14 and Luke 14:15-24. It is wise to respond positively to God’s Word. The number “seven” (v. 1) is a symbol of perfection in Hebrew sacred writings and literature. The reference may be to a banquet pavilion, or the cosmos. (See 8:22-31) Wisdom’s invitation (v. 5) points to the invitation of Jesus to eat His flesh and have eternal life (John 6:51-55). The parallel between wisdom and feeding at the banquet of the Lord, that is, walking in His, ways is amplified for us in these readings. The invitation offers meat and wine. It prefigures the invitation to the Eucharistic Banquet, where the meat and wine are replaced with Jesus’ body and blood. We are what we eat. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What is the meaning behind the “banquet” that wisdom prepares?

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Proverbs is one of the "Wisdom Books" of the Old Testament. It contains instructions on many of the practical matters of daily life. The “proverb” was a familiar literary form in all ancient culture. It was a very suitable device for collecting and summarizing the wisdom of the centuries. But the Book of Proverbs has one important difference: it points the believer to God with instructions on how to live a holy, upright life.

The name of Solomon as author is associated with the Book of Proverbs from the very beginning. Verse 1 of chapter 1 states: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David." We also know that Solomon was noted throughout the ancient world for his superior wisdom (1 Kings 4:29-34). Additional evidence of his authorship is found within the book itself, where Solomon is identified as author of the section from 10:1-22:16 as well as writer of chapters 25-29.

Reading II: Ephesians 5:15-20

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT! What happens when we feed on the flesh of Jesus and His Holy Word? We become like Him. In these verses, St. Paul shows the reason and the effect of feeding on Jesus and living in His Word. The effect is that we are enlightened and gain eternal life.

This letter was written to Gentiles who were once without Christ and in darkness. Now they have become light and have partaken of the banquet Jesus prepared for them. Those who have been so enlightened should live as “wise” and put aside the ways of the world that are foolishness. Those who feed on the Word of God are wise. We are what we eat.

He encourages us to “watch carefully how we live” (v. 15). To live carefully is an acquired skill attributed to wisdom and is pleasing to God (v. 10). A wise person sees things the way God does. Drunkenness is not wise, because it hinders godly judgment. Christians should be filled with the Spirit of God, rather than the wine of men. Life in the spirit is expressed in the spiritual response of thanks to God and to each other. We are what we eat. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What does it mean to: “Watch carefully how you live?”

Gospel: John 6:51-58

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT! What is the diet of a Christian? It is Jesus Himself. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us directly and sternly that we must feed on Him in order to have eternal life. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you" (v. 53). This is the diet of the follower of Christ. Some found this statement of Jesus hard to accept. To some this is a metaphoric invitation to faith in Jesus. To Catholic Christians, Jesus stresses again in verse 53, that to share in His divine life of grace that started in our Baptism, it is necessary to receive Him in the Blessed Eucharist. The Manna in Exodus (v. 50) was an image of the true bread – Christ Himself – that nourishes all of us. This point is confirmed in the use of the Greek word for "chewing".

Jesus stresses that "eating" (translated gnawing or chewing) His flesh and drinking His Blood is essential (v. 54). Therefore, we can understand that the meal that He is referring to is real and not a metaphor or symbol. The use of word "eat or gnaw" so frequently in these verses shows that Jesus seeks a permanent and lingering relationship. He gives us Himself in the Eucharist and He tells that we must maintain His presence in us by living his Holy Word. In the same way that bodily food is necessary for life, the Holy Eucharist is necessary for maintaining our spiritual life. The most important effect of the Holy Eucharist is that it unites us "intimately" with Jesus the Christ. (v. 56)

Some commentators have rendered John 6:26-59 as The Bread of Life Homily or Teaching. Jesus is the new Moses and the giver of the New Bread - Himself. He is also the Bread of Wisdom who feeds all who comes to Him. He is the Eucharist, the source of eternal life for all who eat and drink the flesh and blood of the Son of Man. We are what we eat.

It is not surprising that the "Bread of Life" statements created argument and disbelief among those to whom Jesus spoke. It creates discord and disbelief today. Some commentators interpret the words – "eat my flesh and drink my blood" as symbolic and metaphors for belief and faith. That is, we are to read the Word of God, sit with it chew on it, consume it and live it. I submit that this is a partial revelation. The entire revelation is that when we receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, we receive His Body and Blood Soul and Divinity. We are what we eat. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How can you demonstrate your faith in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist?

Pray About It!

Monday

Read Prov. 6:6. Remember someone who has shared their wisdom with you in prayer.

Tuesday

Read Jn. 6:2. Speak kindly of someone who has hurt you.

Wednesday

Read Jn. 6:58. Share a meal with someone that you care about.

Thursday

Pray the Rosary in honor of Mary our Mother.

Friday

Attend Mass today.

THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

Regarding the day, year, and manner of Our Lady's death, nothing certain is known. The earliest known literary reference to the Assumption is found in the Greek work, *De Obitu S. Dominae*. Catholic faith, however, has always derived our knowledge of the mystery from Apostolic Tradition. Epiphanius (d. 403) acknowledged that he knew nothing definite about it (*Haer.*, lxxix, 11).

The dates assigned for it vary between three and fifteen years after Christ's Ascension. Two cities claim to be the place of her departure: Jerusalem and Ephesus. Common consent favors Jerusalem, where her tomb is shown; but some argue in favor of Ephesus. The first six centuries did not know of the tomb of Mary at Jerusalem.

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