



Daily Reflections

June 18, 2017

Scripture

John 6: 51-58

Jesus said to the Jewish crowds:

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven;
whoever eats this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,
"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus said to them,

"Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you do not have life within you.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life,
and I will raise him on the last day.

For my flesh is true food,
and my blood is true drink.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him.

Just as the living Father sent me
and I have life because of the Father,
so also the one who feeds on me
will have life because of me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven.

Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,
whoever eats this bread will live forever."

Our Scripture Reflection

Understanding Jesus on only a material level, His words were repulsive to some members of the crowd. But Jesus spoke on a more profound and spiritual level than what they would accept. To "eat His flesh and drink His blood" meant to unite themselves completely to Him, to give all to the One who would give all to them.

Food for your Journey

In the agrarian culture of first-century Jews, having bread was essential to survival. There was no endless supply of bread (in dozens of varieties) available at the local market. Simply put: without bread, there was no life. Even today, almost everything we eat comes from something else that has died. Dead animals provide us with meat. Dead wheat gives us bread. Vegetables come from dead plants. When we see how other life dies that we may live, Jesus' words take on a new meaning.

--Trevin Wax, "How is Jesus the 'Living Bread'?" Kingdom People, January 22, 2007. <http://thegospelcoalition.org>.

If there is a patron saint for ordinary people, it is Nicolas Herman. Born into humble circumstances around 1614, in Lorraine, in eastern France, he enlisted in the army during the Thirty Years' War because he had no other way to earn a living. After his discharge he worked for a time as a valet, before entering a Carmelite priory in Paris and adopting the name, Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection.

Lawrence was a lay brother. He lacked the education to become a priest. He spent the rest of his life within the walls of the Priory, cooking in the kitchen and working as a repairer of sandals.

Yet, Brother Lawrence communicated such an attitude of inner peace that others flocked to him, seeking to learn the secrets of the spiritual life. After his death, friends compiled a collection of his sayings, which Father Joseph

de Beaufort gathered into the spiritual classic, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, a book beloved by Catholics and Protestants alike.

Brother Lawrence's rule of life was simple: "I began to live as if there were no one save God and me in the world." This method he took into the Priory kitchen, where, amidst the "common business" of cooking, he attuned himself to God's presence: "Nor is it needful that we should have great things to do. ... We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God."

Although the kitchen could be a place of many distractions, Brother Lawrence managed to cultivate a quality of attention that allowed him to contemplate God even there: "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great [a] tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."

Monastic fare being what it is, Brother Lawrence wouldn't recognize half the gourmet gadgets in the Williams Sonoma catalog. Yet, by all accounts, he attained more joy scrubbing out dirty pots than even the most determined foodie could aspire to.

--For more: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brother_Lawrence.

A Prayer from the Heart

Precious Lord, As I partake of Your precious Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, may I become keenly aware of the price You paid for such a Gift. Amen.