



WORD FOR SUNDAY
Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday Readings: (R1) Prv. 9:1-6. (R2) Eph. 5:15-20. (R3) Jn. 6:51-58.

Chapter six of St. John's Gospel (read on the Sundays from July 29 to August 26) is a commentary on the meaning of the miracle of the loaves. This Sunday's Gospel is of superlative importance, for it supports the Catholic teaching that **Christ is really present in the Blessed Sacrament.**

Other Christian religious teach that "the bread from heaven" promised by Jesus is His teaching and our faith in it. This is true of verses 26 to 50 of this Chapter; but at verse 50, there is a change of subject. Here, Jesus begins to speak about eating, not bread, but His flesh. He meant this to be taken literally!

Consider this fact. **Whenever Jesus was misunderstood and was taken literally when He should not have been, He explained Himself.** Thus in John 3:5, Jesus said to Nicodemus a man must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus took Jesus literally and said, "Can a man return to his mother's womb?" Jesus corrected him and replied that He was speaking of a spiritual rebirth — "of water and Spirit."

Again, in John 11:11, Jesus said, "Our beloved Lazarus has fallen asleep." The disciples missed His meaning. So Jesus immediately explained Himself and said plainly, "Lazarus is dead."

On the contrary, whenever people understood Jesus correctly, but objected to His teaching, He used to insist on it. Thus in John 8:56, Jesus implied that He was living in the time of Abraham. The Jews so understood Him. **They were right, but they objected:** "You are not yet fifty! How can you have seen Abraham?" **Jesus insisted:** "I solemnly declare, before Abraham came to be, I am."

When Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic, the Jews took Him literally. **They were right, but they objected,** "Who can forgive sins

except God alone?" (Mk. 2:7). **Jesus insisted.** To prove He could do what they could not see, He did what they could see — He cured the man on the spot.

Apply this to Sunday's Gospel. Jesus said the bread He would give is His flesh. The Jews took Him literally. **They were right, but they objected,** "How can He give us His flesh to eat?" **Jesus insisted,** "Let Me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

Then to emphasize his insistence, Jesus in the rest of the passage substituted for the Greek word (phagein) "to eat" a much stronger verb (trogein) meaning "to crunch with one's teeth" and translated in the Gospel by the word "feed". Three times Jesus said, "He who feeds on My flesh . . . the man who feeds on My flesh . . . the man who feeds on Me."

And what was the effect? Everybody but the Twelve left Him. And what is more, Jesus let them go. He did not call them back and say, "You don't understand Me." Instead, He turned to the Twelve and asked, "Do you want to leave Me too?" All Peter could say, "You have the words of eternal life."

Eating is a necessary act if I am to derive from bread the nourishment it can give. I may look at bread and admire it, I may philosophize about bread and analyze it, I may talk about bread and eulogize its quality, I may handle bread and be assured of its excellence — but unless I eat it, I shall not be nourished by it. So our Lord said, "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man, you have no life in you."

Eating is an intensely personal act: no one else can do it for you. You cannot eat by proxy. If I am to be nourished, I myself, and no other, must eat! If everyone else goes to Holy Communion, and not I, their going will not supply my needs. "He who feeds on my flesh . . . has life eternal."



Keeping Tune

Benjamin Floyd, left, harmonizes with his son Kenneth during a recent "Black Wednesday" program sponsored by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on Chili Avenue. The Wednesday evening cultural program offers black and white residents of the neighborhood entertainment and insight into black history.

Father Welzer Retires

Father Arthur A. Welzer, a native of Rochester and former instructor at Aquinas Institute and professor at St. Andrew's Seminary, recently retired from the active pastoral ministry after

40 years of service, the past 25 of it in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Seminaries and Niagara University.

Father Welzer is a graduate of St. Peter and Paul School, St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's

Rochester missionary to La Paz, Boliva, Father Peter Deckman, is Father Welzer's nephew.

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