

12 Pent B  
John 6:53-59  
Prov 9:1-6

Well, we are into the third week of hearing Jesus tell us he is the bread of life and this time it is truly graphic. We may want to not dwell on the way Jesus speaks but the Word of God cannot be ignored. That would be foolish of us.

The words of Jesus sound gruesome to us. And indeed they are graphic. The word Jesus uses for eat is an aramaic word meaning gnaw, chew, or gulp. He also uses the word “sarx” meat for his body. These ideas would be quite normal to hear in that culture.

The Israelites were a people who sacrificed animals to God. They would burn part of the meat and when they ate it they believed the God and its power had entered into them. When people rose from such a feast they believed they were literally God-Filled. They were also accustomed to using blood of animals to mark, sanctify and forgive in the name of God. Think about blood being used on the doorposts of Israelites in Egypt.

And Moses splashed the people in the wilderness with blood in the Covenant ceremony that united them with the one God, Yahweh. The ancient people used blood as the medium in establishing a community between God and human beings. And Jesus uses the metaphor of eating and drinking to teach his disciples that he is the Word, the very wisdom of God and we should feed on him to build community and sustain us spiritually.

I know this is heard for us to hear. Our culture is obsessed with not eating. WE are an anorexic nation with so much food. We have so much, we have the highest rate of obesity in the world, we are the bread basket of the world yet we are one of the least Spiritual countries in the world.

I like the image of Jesus as the word made flesh. That at the Eucharist we consume his body for nourishment and drink his blood to be blessed and forgiven but I am also thinking about what consumes us?

Our work, our families, the health care debate, the state of the church, the economy, what she is doing or what he has said.

Today I think we are being reminded that we must not deprive ourselves of Spiritual nourishment in our daily lives. We must be aware, we must know, we must have the wisdom to discern what is healing and sustaining our lives as opposed to what is chewing us up and spitting us out. I think we all can relate to feeling chewed up at some point in our lives.

For me all this gruesome language illustrates that what sustains us is relationships. Jesus uses the word abide. “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” Abide means stay, remain, dwell and Jesus promises that through his flesh and blood we will remain with him eternally. I’ve learned over the years, that eternally does not just mean a long time with out an ending. Eternal life is participation in the kingdom and that, for a believer, has already begun. From the day of one’s baptism into Christ the eternal era has begun.

We do not look forward to eternal life, we are already living it. Just as we are not reenacting the last supper when we share the Eucharist, we are there living it with Jesus.

The Eucharist is a present day involvement in that upper room and as we eat the word and internalize the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we know it, he makes himself known and together we are sustained, nourished in the good times and through the bad. Then we are sent out to share this meal, our Spiritual food. Remember it is not a private meal. We are called to share the feast, bring others to the table to taste and see that the Lord is good. Abiding in and with Christ is the only thing that will fulfill us.

So, today think about what consumes you? Where do your thoughts and actions abide? Are you trying to face what consumes you alone? Today you are invited to feed on Spiritual sustenance. Jesus gives up himself freely. He is the one who satisfies not the things of this world.

We come together to share in eating bread the Thanksgiving and celebration that Jesus lived,, died and was resurrected. By his word and flesh we are nourished and by his blood we are forgiven.

Dwell and remain with him...be God-filled eternally, yesterday, today and tomorrow.