

SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



Wednesday August 21 for the 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

OPENING PRAYER: Jesus, we once again gather in your name to share your Word. In the readings today, people are asked to decide for you. May we always say a strong “No” to other gods and proclaim a strong “Yes” to you and your ways. Nourish us now with the bread of your Word. Amen.

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John 6:60-69

The Words of Eternal Life.*

60 Then many of his disciples who were listening said, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?”

61 Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, “Does this shock you?”

62 What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?*

63 It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh* is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him.^c

65 And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father.”

66 As a result of this, many [of] his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.

67 Jesus then said to the Twelve, “Do you also want to leave?”

68 Simon Peter answered him, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

69 We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”^d

70 Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?”

71 He was referring to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot; it was he who would betray him, one of the Twelve.^e

Notes

* [6:60–71] These verses refer more to themes of Jn 6:35–50 than to those of Jn 6:51–58 and seem to be addressed to members of the Johannine community who found it difficult to accept the high christology reflected in the bread of life discourse.

* [6:62] This unfinished conditional sentence is obscure. Probably there is a reference to Jn 6:49–51. Jesus claims to be the bread that comes down from heaven (Jn 6:50); this claim provokes incredulity (Jn 6:60); and so Jesus is pictured as asking what his disciples will say when he goes up to heaven.

* [6:63] Spirit, flesh: probably not a reference to the eucharistic body of Jesus but to the supernatural and the natural, as in Jn 3:6. Spirit and life: all Jesus said about the bread of life is the revelation of the Spirit.

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Concretely, what does this statement mean for you and your household?
2. Name some ways you “return to a former way of life.” It may be a speech pattern that isn’t kind, a habit that doesn’t honor the Holy Spirit.
3. In the Gospel, the disciples found Jesus’ teaching on the Eucharist hard to take. Are there some of his teachings that you find very hard to embrace? If so, give an example/s.

Commentary

Today’s reading concludes Jesus’ Bread of Life discourse. As with the first reading, the setting for this Gospel shows people gathered around a leader raised up by God. Words are spoken to declare what God has done or is doing. Those who hear are given a free choice to either accept or decline what God offers. The disciples murmur among themselves about what Jesus has been teaching, which echoes the murmuring of their ancestors in the desert. Their faith is “shaken” by Jesus’ words but Jesus makes no effort to water down what he has been teaching them. In fact, he questions them, “If you were troubled by the thought of me descending from heaven, what will you think of me when I ascend and go back to heaven?” Both descending and ascending imply that Jesus is a heavenly being, the very claim that scandalized his hearers in the first place. Jesus is telling us that if we live only in the “flesh” (i.e., on the natural level), we can never understand who he is or what he is about. We must become spiritually connected to him by faith which, of course, is a gift—but it demands our cooperation. At this point, many disciples walk away. They just cannot embrace Jesus or his claims. But some remain. For John, a big part of discipleship is remaining with Jesus. His “leaving” versus “remaining” is also an issue for John’s communities, especially after Jewish Christians have been expelled from the synagogue. Jesus’ Bread of Life discourse ends on a positive note with Peter’s profession of faith: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” Throughout the discourse, Jesus is calling his listeners to have faith in him as the One sent by God. But the people resist and continue in disbelief. Finally, a small core group, the Twelve, represented by Peter, professes faith in Jesus.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Parish Hall and Zoom
Wednesday, Aug 21 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday
Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting
Time: Aug 21, 2024 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: [https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/tZolduisqDosE923wHRoszXqNBSkCL57ORPg/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjorHtKTthCORpx5Goj4d-jwpiFdj_oPzwjNMS9AeDvnGMBxOZFTRY](https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/85136740699?pwd=Q2pXLzdzZFdNNU1NajVpeEtKUohJQTo9jwpiFdj_oPzwjNMS9AeDvnGMBxOZFTRY)

Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/85136740699?pwd=Q2pXLzdzZFdNNU1NajVpeEtKUohJQTo9>

Meeting ID: 811 6265 5618
Passcode: 280607