

The one who feeds on Jesus will have Life!

On this **nice warm sunny day** I'm going to remind you of something we all experienced in **each of our last several winters ...** and that's **snow and ice**.

We're **kind of skittish** about those times and **when we know** a storm is coming we run to the grocery store ... and **what is it we buy?** **Bread & Milk!** Right?

Both of those **food items** have a **shelf life ...** so we normally only buy a little at a time ... knowing we'll pick up some fresh items next visit.

But, **when the threat** of running out of those foods is there due to a **predicted storm & bad roads**, we go out and get some more ... just to be sure.

The **News** tell us that the **shelves** of **Bread and milk** empty quickly before a storm.

Having **bread & milk** in the house is a **sign** that our future nourishment is secure.

What's your favorite kind of bread? **What** would you grab off the shelf to buy?

Would it be ...

White bread, Whole Wheat bread, Rye bread, French bread, Italian bread?

We know **what bread means to us** and we all have **our favorites**.

Well, for the last 3 weeks we've been talking about **bread .**

but not the kind that comes from **the store.**

No, we've been talking about **very special bread ... Bread** that comes from **Heaven!**
a little review ...

the Israelites of the Old Testament had a fond place in their hearts for
what they called ***Bread from Heaven*** ... **what** were they referring to?

To them, *Bread from Heaven* always referred to **the Wisdom of God!**

This included the **Ten Commandments**, the **Law of Moses** and the **Torah**.
All of these things were given to them by **God** and they brought life to **Israel!**
These things were considered **"Bread"** ... come down from Heaven!

Last week **Jesus** quoted the Prophets before Him who foretold ...
"They shall all be taught by God."

Well today, Jesus reveals that He is **the fulfilment of that prophecy, saying,**
"I am the living Bread that came down from Heaven."
meaning that **He's the fullness of God's wisdom ...** come down from Heaven!

Jesus speaks God's wisdom to us in the Gospels ...
which is **why we proclaim the Gospels at Sunday Mass ...**
and **every day** of the week at **Daily Mass!**

That's **also why we stand** when the **Gospels are proclaimed ...**
to reverence that we are **listening to God Himself, Jesus, speaking to us.**

Feeding on **God's word** is **important ... it's very important ... but there's more!**

Recall, St. Paul's declaration in 1st Corinthians where he said,
"Christ, the Wisdom of God and the Power of God."

Jesus is both ... the Wisdom of God ... and the Power of God!

And Jesus wants to share both ... His Wisdom ... and His Power with us.

When we feed on His words ... we acquire His Wisdom.

But how do we acquire His Power?

That's what Jesus reveals today ...
we **acquire His Power when we feed on ... His Flesh!**

That's pretty strong stuff!

So strong that the Jews had quite a difficult time hearing it.
John records today, *"The Jews quarreled among themselves saying,*
'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'"

But, Jesus reiterates 4 times ... that the Bread that He will give them is His Flesh!

What He's doing here is preparing them for ...
something He will make clear to them at the Last Supper.
There, He will establish the way to feed us with his Power in the context of a Holy Meal ... a meal where the elements of Bread and Wine are miraculously changed into His Flesh and Blood as food for believers.

Yes, by God's design and desire, He offers to feed us with Himself, so that He, God can be united to us in a most special way and He can impart His power to us.

Jesus offers His Power to us in the Eucharist ,
the **miraculous *Bread from Heaven,***
that we **can receive in a Holy Meal ... the Mass.**

This gives us **our most intimate union** with **Jesus** ... it's a **Holy Communion**. And **this is how** we get to carry out His command to eat His flesh and drink His Blood.

It's in **Holy Mass** that **we Catholics** get to feed on God!

By the miracle Jesus instituted at the **Last Supper**,
Jesus becomes our food and drink, over and over again.

This is **why** understanding the 6th Chapter of John is so important ... here **Jesus** gives the **Bread of Life Discourse** of the access we have to Wisdom and Power of God.

Recall what Lady Wisdom foretold in our **first Reading**.

"Come eat of my food and drink of my wine ... that you may live."

Jesus reiterates this in our **Gospel** today **when He says**, "*Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you.*"

Here, Jesus is telling the people how they need to nourish themselves to have **life, now and forever**. **How?** They must feed on His flesh in order to have life in Him.

But the **Jews** couldn't picture how this was to happen and **so** they murmured,
"How can this be?"

That's **probably** the **same question** that the **Jews** asked 1200 years earlier when **God** fed them with Manna in the Desert! What a **truly unexplainable miracle ... to wake up every morning and find bread there on the sand of the desert**. Imagine that! And this went on for 40 years! So **surely they** asked themselves, "*How can this be?*"

And **then just a few days before** this Gospel passage, in **the verses** we read at the beginning of John 6, **Jesus** performed another great miracle by feeding **5000** people from just 5 loaves, **surely they** asked themselves, "*How can this be?*"

In those **two miracles** with bread, God showed the people that he had the power to multiply food to feed them **physically**. And **now**, in today's Gospel, Jesus is calling the people to believe that somehow, someday He also has the power to multiply Himself, so as to feed them **spiritually too!**

Little did they know that **Jesus** would take one of the most natural things that we do, **eating**, and use it as the way that He would feed us with Himself. We call it **Holy Communion**. That's when God, who is holy, comes into our very bodies!

Why did Jesus want us to do this?

It's **because he wants us** to be prepared to have Everlasting Life with Him.

And **to do so** we need His Wisdom and His Power in us!

For **if Jesus is alive in us now ... then we will be alive in Jesus later!**
It's **union and oneness** that makes this happen!

In **today's Gospel, Jesus says**, *“Just as ... I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of Me.”*

What is the Bread we need for Eternal Life? Is it white, wheat, rye?

No, the bread we need is not from the store ... it's from... Heaven ... it's Jesus.
Jesus is the living Bread come down from Heaven ...
and **whoever eats this Bread** will live forever!

Yes, **Jesus is the Wisdom of God and the Power of God.**

We take in the Wisdom of God when we feed on **Jesus' words in the Gospels.**
We take in the Power of God when we feed on **Jesus' Flesh in Holy Communion.**

Eating the Eucharist, is the way that Jesus designed for us to take in His Power ...
for by a huge miracle His Flesh and Blood are veiled in the Bread and Wine!

What happens when we eat white or wheat or rye bread?
It is metabolized by our body and it becomes us ... the bread becomes us.

What happens when we eat the unleavened bread
that is brought forward and consecrated at Mass?

The **physical wafer of bread** is still metabolized by our body ...
But the sacramental presence and power of Jesus is absorbed by our Soul ...
and we become more like Jesus!
In this way **the Bread** doesn't become us ... we become the Bread!

Perhaps you've heard the saying ... “You are what you eat!”
Well, this was never more true than when you eat the Eucharist ...
because it's then that you become more and more like Jesus!

Imagine that ... we get to feed on miraculous Bread from Heaven ... like Moses.
But this is more than just bread ... it's the powerful presence of Jesus, the Lord!

Let's feed on Him often ... coming to Mass hungry for his Wisdom in the Gospel
and coming to Mass hungry for His Power in Holy Communion.
For, **Jesus is the living Bread** come down from Heaven ...
and **whoever eats this Bread** will live forever!