

We are fed by the whole Mystery of Christ!

Before my homily today, I'm going to have the Ushers come forward to pass out pencils and a little card with 5 questions on it ...

It's a little Quiz based on the Homework assignment I gave you last week.

You did do your homework ... didn't you? I asked you to go home ... open you're your bible to a certain Gospel and read a certain Chapter.

I called it the most foundational Chapter in the Bible supporting our Catholic belief in the primacy of the Wisdom and Power of Jesus and the Eucharist!

Do you remember the Gospel? John It has 21 Chapters in all.

Do you remember the Chapter? Six

Do you remember the Verses? 1-15, 24 – 35, perhaps all the way to 71, the end.

Did you do your homework?

If you did, then it's obvious that getting to Heaven ... and guiding other souls into Heaven is important to you!

If you didn't do your homework ... why not?

What could possibly be more important than getting into Heaven ... and guiding all your family and friends to come with you?

Are you serious about Heaven or not?

**Heaven isn't something that just happens on its own without your involvement!
You play a part in this ... do you know what your role is?**

**The crowd in our Gospel today asked Jesus,
*"What can we do to accomplish the works of God?"***

That's a Good question!

What if someone in your family asked you that same question; How'd you answer?

**This could be your one and only chance to guide someone on the road to Heaven.
And what would you say? Would you be able to help them?**

I would guess that many of you ... kinda sorta know... but ... might not be able to articulate it very well or even at all. Which is why the Church continues to give us these truths ... over and over again ... year after year ...

**so that we own them and use them for ourselves
and ... we're able to credibly pass them on to our Children and Grandchildren.**

Today, in John 6: 24–35, Jesus clearly says that the Father is giving them bread But not just bread to nourish them physically ... this bread is very different.

This is true bread.

And the true bread that **the Father sends down from heaven ... is Jesus!**

Jesus declares, “*For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. I am the bread of life.”*

Now be very careful!

As a Catholic hearing this declaration ...

it’s **all too easy** to immediately think of the Eucharist ...

as soon as **Jesus says,** “*I am the bread of life.”*”

But don’t! Because that’s not what **Jesus means here!** His self-description as *the bread of life* is much broader ... it encompasses the whole mystery of Christ.

St. John the Evangelist does indeed introduce the Eucharist in this chapter ... but he wants to be sure we see it in the context of the whole mystery of Christ!

And so he’s going to take **the central image of bread**

(*bread from heaven ... bread of angels ... bread of life*)

and associate it with ... the whole mystery ... of Christ ...

which includes the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation,

the mystery of Christ’s miracles,

the mystery of Christ’s Passion & Death on the Cross,

the mystery of the Christ’s Resurrection, and

the mystery of salvation being secured by our faith in Christ ...

And then once John has that all in place, he’ll let **Jesus speak** about the mystery of the Eucharist ... which He’ll do next Sunday in verse 51.

What John wants us to see in the verses proclaimed today

is **this notion of God** imparting Wisdom to us ...

something God did all throughout Salvation history ...

and **that He** did it most completely through His Son Jesus Christ!

John wants us to see that Jesus ... is the fullness of God’s Wisdom!

Remember last week how **Jesus** multiplied the loaves and fed 5000.

Well, today the crowd is trying to get Jesus to make them some more bread ...

so they refer to how their fathers ate the miraculous manna in the desert ...

and they quote Scripture saying, “*He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”*”

Clearly, they're recalling how God fed them with bread.

And yet, **when Jesus replies, He says, "Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven."**

So, what's Jesus talking about? Of course Moses didn't give them the manna. The manna was from God. So why does Jesus bring Moses up at all?

It had to be that the manna, the bread from Heaven already symbolized something else ... something that Moses himself gave to Israel.

What did Moses give to Israel?

Moses gave them God's wisdom in the 10 Commandments, the Law, the Torah!

**So, Jesus' reference here to "true" bread is looking ...
not so much forward to the sacrament of the Eucharist,
as it is backward to the Old Testament figure of Wisdom!**

In the Book of Proverbs, **Wisdom** cries out:

"Come, eat of my bread, and drink the wine I have prepared,"
where **bread and wine** were **the teachings of God!**

**So we see that historically ... Bread referred to God's wisdom ...
wisdom that was imparted to the people through Moses, the Law & the Torah.
This wisdom along with the manna in the desert ... all gave life to Israel.**

But now Jesus tells them that God is imparting His wisdom to them through Him!

St. John emphasizes God's new plan into the Prologue of his Gospel, writing:

*"Because while the Law was given through Moses,
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."*

You see, when Jesus uses the word 'true'

(in saying, "*My Father gives you the true bread from Heaven*"),
**He's setting this new bread ... Himself ... above all other breads,
even above the bread given to the ancestors of Israel through Moses.**

For **unlike the Torah that gave life just to Israel ...**

**Jesus, the new Bread and true Bread ...
gives life to the whole world ... and not just life ... but eternal life.**

When Jesus makes the statement: 'I am the bread of life.'

He's proclaiming that He is the wisdom that will guide one to God and Eternal Life!

Jesus is the True Bread ... **God's full wisdom** that nourishes one to eternal life.
This is **far superior to the Torah**, which was unable to nourish one to eternal life.

Gone is the **limitation** of the **Torah** being just for the Chosen People.

Here, **Jesus, the True Bread**, promises that
anyone who comes to him will not hunger ... and
anyone who believes in him will not thirst.

In other words, **those** who come to **Jesus** and believe in Him
will find rest from their never-ending search for **Wisdom**.

No longer will **Moses, manna, The Law** or the **Torah** provide sufficient nourishment.

Jesus, the True bread, is the **only nourishment**
that will truly satisfy man's **hunger** and **thirst**.

God made us with a **mortal body** that hungers and thirsts for food, and
God made us with an **immortal soul** that hungers and thirsts for Him.

In **verses 1- 15** last week, **St. John** showed that
God sees us in our hunger ...
God desires to feed us ... and
God has the power to feed us.

And **God** does this most completely in **His divine Son, Jesus Christ** ...
St. Paul tells us ... **Jesus is the Wisdom of God and the Power of God!**

That is **why** when **the crowd** asks Jesus,
"What can we do to accomplish the works of God?"

Jesus answers,
"This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent."

How do you get to Heaven? It's simple ...
you believe in ... and follow ... and feed on ... **the One God** sent ... **Jesus**.

St. Paul encourages us in this in our **Second reading today** from **Ephesians**, saying:
*"Brothers and sisters ... you must no longer live as ... Gentiles do ...
assuming that you have heard of (Jesus) and were taught in (Jesus) ...
in righteousness and holiness of truth."*

Today, the crowd comes to Jesus asking for a sign so they might believe in Him.

They came asking for a sign ... because they didn't see that **He** was **the Sign!**

Are we the same way?

Do we go **day after day** looking for a miracle ... when **the Miracle** is with us?

Are we not seeing the miracles all around us?

My brother, Jim, regularly visits the men in **Donaldson Prison** as part of **Kairos**.

He told me **that recently his group** was discussing miracles and when he asked them if anyone would like to share about a miracle in their life ...

one guy ... without any hesitation said, "I got up today."

How profound! Do you realize how many things have to go right just to get up?

There's miracles all around us ... **do you see them?**

All of us got up today ... **do you** see that as a miracle?

Do you see that we are held in existence by an all-powerful God ...

who watches over us and loves us and feeds us most fully

with **wisdom and truth** through the Son He sent to redeem us?

God the Father has given us His Greatest Gift ... His Son, Jesus.

Jesus is the True Bread ... the **full wisdom** of God!

Next week we'll contemplate the next 10 verses from the 6th chapter of John.

Please pre-read them!

There we'll discover that **Jesus** also gives us true food,

And the true food that He gives us is **His flesh and blood!**

It's then that **Jesus** reveals His greatest Gift ... the **Eucharist**,

the **true and substantial presence of Jesus, the Bread of Life,** among us!

Let's **contemplate** the **awesome mystery** that we have in **Jesus, our Bread of Life**.

It's through the whole mystery of Him that we have hope of Everlasting Life.

Yes, **we're fed** through the **Eucharist**, but not first or only through the Eucharist.

We're fed through the whole mystery of Christ ... His **Incarnation, His Death** and **Resurrection**, through our **act of faith in Him**, through our **fellowship** with Him ... and through feeding on Him in the Eucharist!

Let us **search for** and **hold onto** the **only food** that will satisfy us forever,

Jesus, the true bread from Heaven.

Throughout **John's Gospel**, there is a **repeated** and **fundamental contrast** between the **Law** that came through Moses and the **New Source of Life** that God has imparted to the world **in Jesus Christ**.

The **contrast** is between **really receiving** the life that God **wants us to have** through Jesus Christ, or **simply living** according to our **own resources**, or even just living by **the Torah**, which aren't going to get us **anywhere**.

They're not going to get us **into fellowship with God**.
They're not going to get us to **this Everlasting Life**.

That's **why** this **particular Gospel passage** is so vital.
It's **telling us** about **how** this **gift of God**, Jesus,
came down to us and **can really teach us ...**
it's about the whole **mystery of Christ**.

We **will continue to be hungry** until we have Jesus, the **true food** from Heaven.
In Him we have the fullness of God's wisdom **and** the food of Everlasting Life.