

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle B

August 16, 2015

Know Your Faith Eating the Flesh of Jesus



The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “**How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”** Jn.6:52

Eating Human flesh disgusted the Jews. They argued among themselves, “*How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”* (phago Greek) The word “eat” is used 97 times in the New testament, always meaning physically eating food. Even drinking animal blood was prohibited by the law of Moses .

The Jews accepted the words of Christ; literally, not symbolically.

Jesus didn't correct them.

But the Jews were used to eating the lamb of sacrifice both at the first Passover and at all subsequent Passover sacrifices. **Jesus told the Jews to eat his flesh as the Pascal sacrifice.**

*Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.**”* Jn. 6: 53

Jesus uses the word “eat,” but when the Jews question him, he uses an even stronger Greek verb for “eat” (Trogo means “to chew or gnaw.”

The Greek words for **flesh** (sarx) and **blood** (haima) are always used for the real human body and blood. Jesus uses the same Greek word (haima) for blood again at the Last Supper, when He says of the chalice, “***This is my blood.***” Mat. 26: 28 Jesus chose the most graphic words possible, and **His audience understood Jesus literally, NOT symbolically.**

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Jn. 6:54

What happens when the faithful eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus----The Eucharist?

We are promised eternal life.

If the Eucharist were only a symbol, could a symbol give us eternal life or heaven?

For Jews the body and soul were not two distinct entities, but one thing. The soul dwelt in every party of the body, and to eat the flesh of a creature was to share in both its material and spiritual life. So when Jesus says they must eat His flesh, **Jesus means they must share in eternal life.**

Why were the first Christians called “Cannibals?”

When we eat & drink the Eucharist, we become “living tabernacles.”

How can we become “living monstresances?”

Source: John Salza. The Biblical Basis for the Eucharist, (Our Sunday visitor Huntington, IN, 2008) PP. 37-158
Steven Ray. St. John's Gospel, A Bible Study Guide & Commentary (Ignatius, San Francisco, 2002) PP. 157-164
Fr. Dwight Longenecker, More Christianity (Ignatius, San Francisco, 2010) P. 167