J.M.J.

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Bread of Life

**Lesson 3: John 6 (The Bread of Life Discourse)**

**Opening Prayer**

* **Readings for the Feast of Corpus Christi (the Body of Christ)**
  + Corpus Christi Sunday highlights our devotion to the Eucharist.
  + The Church gives us special readings.
  + **Cycle/Year A**
    - John 6:51-58
    - Around the time of Passover. After Jesus has fed the 5000 and then crossed the sea to go to the other side, by walking on the water. Then He taught the crowds, and this is called the **Bread of Life Discourse**.
    - **Why do we as Catholics believe that the Eucharist is truly the flesh of Jesus Christ?** *Because Jesus said so!*
  + **Cycle/Year B**
  + Mark 14: 12-16, 22-26
    - The Last Supper, when He reveals what He was talking about in the Bread of Life Discourse, which occurred a year earlier.
  + Bread of Life Discourse (John 6) is the promise; Last Supper (Mark 14) is the fulfillment of that promise.
    - If Jesus promises something, He will come through with it. He will find a way to give us what He has promised.
  + **Cycle/Year C**
    - Luke 9:10-17
    - **Why does the Church give us this reading?**
    - Similarities with the Last Supper—blessed, broke, and gave it to the disciples. (but the disciples are the ones distributing it)
    - Christ here tells the Apostles—YOU feed them. And they all ate and were satisfied.
    - At the Last Supper, they were given the task to continue this mission—DO THIS in memory of Me.
    - Through the Mass, the feeding of the multitude happens. And if we participate properly, we will truly be satisfied by the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Focus for the kids:** Jesus’ *promise* to give His flesh, the *fulfillment of that promise* at the Last Supper, and the *continual fulfillment of that promise* in the Mass.

* **What is the significance of the Passover?**
  + It is a Jewish feast commemorating the passing of the angel of death over the Hebrew people in Egypt. Through the death of the Egyptian first-borns, the people were set free from slavery. (physical slavery)
  + At the Last Supper, Jesus was celebrating this feast with His Apostles.
* **Connection to Jesus’ Passover**
  + Now the One Who dies is the Son of God, Jesus Christ.
  + We commemorate this in the Mass.
  + Our freedom is that from the slavery of sin (spiritual slavery)
* **Three Passovers mentioned in the Gospels (all in the Gospel of John)**
  + John 2:13
    - Connection to the Temple
  + John 6
    - Bread of Life discourse
  + John 13-17
    - Final Passover—the Last Supper
* **Why don’t we celebrate the Passover anymore? Why aren’t we Jewish if Jesus and Mary and the Apostles were?**
  + Because while we come from that tradition, we believe that Jesus is God, and so we are Christians (because we follow Christ).
  + Now we do not celebrate the Passover, but the Mass!
* **What happened to the Temple?**
  + First one was destroyed by the Babylonians
  + Second one was destroyed by the Romans
  + Another Temple will never be built! They have tried, but something always prevents it. Because Jesus Himself *is* the Third Temple! And by our Baptism we become living stones of that Temple, being built up into the Body of Christ.
* **Connection between Bread of Life discourse and the Last Supper**
  + READ John 6:22-71
    - **Problem of the Jews #1)** Jesus said “I am the bread that came down from Heaven.” (6:41)
      * He is associating Himself with the manna in the desert, given in the time of Moses. He is saying that He is greater than that and that He has come from God. To them, this is blasphemy!
      * They know Him and His family, so they cannot believe that He is God.
      * He is saying that He has seen God (6:46)
      * He says again that He is the bread of life (6:48)
    - “I am the living bread…and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world.” (6:51)
    - **Problem of the Jews #2)** “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” (6:52)
      * Promises eternal life and the raising up on the last day of those who eat His flesh and drink His blood. (6:54)
      * His flesh is unlike the manna, because those who ate the manna still died, but those who eat of the living bread will live forever. (6:58)
    - **Problem of the Jews (and many of His disciples) #3)** “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” (6:60)
      * He speaks to them of spirit and life (6:63)
      * And He reminds them that no one can come to Him unless it has been granted by the Father. (6:65)
    - **KEY VERSE:** “As a result of this, many of His disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied Him.” (6:66)
      * His response is not one of panic or anger. He does not correct Himself or say that He was just speaking symbolically (if He had been, then He would have called back those disciples and cleared up their confusion!)
      * Instead, this is what He says: “Jesus then said to the Twelve, ‘Do you also want to leave?’” (6:67)
        + He turns to His closest followers and gives them the option to leave too!
* **Two groups here:**
* No one knows *how* Jesus is going to fulfill this promise (“how can this man give us His flesh to eat?”)
  + **Unfaithful group:** does not trust, so they leave
  + **Faithful group:** does not know how He will give them His flesh, but they believe and trust and wait.

*“There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate The Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be.” –Fulton Sheen*

**Questions** *(LCE page #19)*

* **Why is it hard to believe what Jesus is saying, that He will give us His flesh?**
* **Why is it easy to believe what He is saying? Why would those who believed actually believe Him?**
* **What two stories precede the Bread of Life discourse?**
* **When is the Eucharist first mentioned in the Gospel?**
* **How did Jesus promise the Eucharist?**
* **Can we interpret these words in a symbolic way, or as a figure of speech?**
* **What are we to conclude from this?**
  + The Eucharist is TRULY the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.