

Questions from the Gospel of John

5th Session: "The Eucharist"

Introductory Statement: It is obvious that Chapter 6 is about the Eucharist, but so is chapter 7. Here we find that just as the Eucharist is given to satisfy our spiritual hunger, so the Spirit is given to satisfy our spiritual thirst. "All longing is longing for God." Goethe

"Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat." (6:5)

First, there is a reference to the Passover: "Now the Passover was near. (6:4). **Second**, the gestures of Jesus are very similar to that of a priest in celebrating the Liturgy of the Eucharist. (6:11) **Finally**, John draws a sharp contrast between the bread that was first available and the bread that was multiplied. (6:9, 13)

"It is I, do not be afraid." (6:20)

"It is I," become a weak translation of "I AM." It could be translated: "I am here!! Do not be afraid!" Before discussing the Eucharist, John wants to remind us of the action of God at the time of the Exodus when he delivered the Hebrew slaves from the chaos and hopeless of Egyptian bondage.

"This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." (6:29)

As we noted before in Baptism, this means much more than believing that Jesus existed and died and rose. Accepting this is great BUT does not yet satisfy what is meant by authentic faith. The critical moment in faith occurred when our lives begin to change, and we seek to be more Christlike!

"I am the bread of life." (6:35)

You will see the crowd ignores what Jesus has said about faith, they want stuff, they want miraculous signs – NOT personal conversion.

Jesus is certainly not referring to his Body and Blood the Eucharist here!!

Jesus is referring to himself not the Sacrament. Here he is offering the food of Divine Revelation.

The reason John moved his discourse about the Eucharist to this 6th chapter and away from the Last Supper, is precisely so that he could introduce it with this discussion of the need for Faith (Like he did with Baptism), before we can receive the Eucharist in a fruitful manner.

"Is not this Jesus, whose father and mother we know?" (6:42)

How we rationalize our unbelief! Remember these qualities of discipleship: 1) personal experience is more

trustworthy than provincial prejudice, and 2) trusting one's own intuition and being open to surprise. God almost NEVER does things as we expect!!!!

“The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (6:51)

Only NOW do we see explicit and unmistakable reference to the Eucharist. The Body and Blood of Jesus are truly present in the Eucharist. But, there is also this challenge. There is a danger. We can reverence the Sacrament, perhaps with great scrupulosity, but neglect its meaning in one's life. John is great concerned with such things.

John seems to be extremely concerned lest Christian observance represents only the external practice of ritual, without personal experiential union with Christ.

“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide (there's that word again) in me, and I in them.” (6:56)

If we are ready to hear it, Jesus is telling us that when we mere human beings participate in the Eucharist, we begin to live the same divine life he shares with the heavenly Father.

“This is a difficult teaching; who can accept it!?” (6:60)

This is not merely about the Eucharist, it's about the whole of Jesus' teaching here. Yes, about the Eucharist but also about himself as the bread of life, AND all the implications that make up what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

“Lord, to whom shall we go.” (6:68)

Not exactly the ringing endorsement Jesus would have liked to have heard.

“Never has anyone spoken like this. (7:46)

How tragic. The very one's who do know something of the law of Moses find that their desire to control things has made it impossible for them to see that it was really meant to prepare them for something more surprising and wonderful than they had ever imagined.

Qualities of Discipleship

1. Profound yearning for the meaning of life
2. Stability. To be a good disciple one must be able to make a firm commitment and to stay with it through thick and thin.
3. trusting one's own intuition and being open to surprise.
4. personal experience is more trustworthy than provincial prejudice

This also refers to John's parish who frustrated their Jewish neighbors because of their appreciation of the divinity of Jesus and the presence of the Spirit among them.