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The Bread of Life



Dear Friends in Christ,

*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.
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 6:53-55).*

We have already considered the Eucharist as the *real presence* and the *sacrifice* of Christ. With these words our Lord teaches about the Eucharist as *food*. The solemn, authoritative nature of the teaching is striking and should make us take note of its importance: *Amen, amen, I say to you...* Some things for us to keep in mind regarding this truth.

First, as food is to the body, the Eucharist is to the soul. Life, whether physical or spiritual, always needs to be nourished. The *Catechism* states it beautifully: *What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ...preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism (CCC 1392).*

Second, we receive *the living, risen Christ*. We are not cannibals; it is not a dead man that we consume in Holy Communion. Christ's death benefits us because He is also risen and His risen body has become the source of eternal life. His risen, living life within us by Baptism is nourished by that same life in the Eucharist.

Third, we receive *the entire Christ*. Again, we are not cannibals; it is not bits and pieces of Him we consume. When you receive the Host, you receive the entirety of

our Lord; not just His Body, but also His Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Those who receive only from the chalice consume not only His Blood, but His Body, Soul, and Divinity. And if the priest has to break a host in half when distributing Holy Communion, he does not then say, "Half of the Body of Christ." Our Lord is fully present in every host and in every part of the host.

Finally, our Lord *desires* to nourish us with the Eucharist. So, let us pray for two things. First, on our part, for a greater hunger for the Eucharist...to desire and long for the nourishment He gives. Second, on His part, that He free us from this estrangement and feed us again with the Bread of Life.

Updates...

Food Distribution. Another heartfelt *thank you* to the corps of volunteers who ran the drive-thru food distribution yesterday. From the donations brought in last week to the distribution today, this is a wonderful parish work. And it clearly answers a need, as the number of people served yesterday was almost double last month's.

May Crowning. To honor our Lady, we will have the traditional May crowning on *May 13th, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima*. We will live-stream the praying of the rosary and the actual crowning of the statue in the church. A good way to prepare would be to pray this novena to our Lady:

O Most Holy Virgin Mary, you came to Fatima to reveal the graces that come from praying the Holy Rosary to three little shepherd children. Inspire us with a sincere love of this devotion so that, like the shepherd children, it is not a burdensome task but a life-giving prayer. May our prayers and meditations on the mysteries of our redemption bring us closer to your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Like the children of Fatima, we want to bring God's word to others. Give us the strength, O Lord, to overcome our doubts so that we may be messengers of the Gospel. We know that Jesus lives in our hearts and we receive Him in the Eucharist.

Lord Jesus, the miracles, prophecies and prayers that Your Mother brought to us at Fatima amazed the whole world. We are certain of her closeness to You. We ask through the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima that you graciously hear and answer our prayers.

Especially... (*Mention your intentions here...*)

Our Lady of Fatima, Pray for us!

Our Lady of the Rosary, Pray for us!

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Pray for us!

Adult Confirmation. Are you an adult Catholic who has not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation? Father Oetjen is beginning instruction with a view to the administration of Confirmation in the coming months. If interested, please email him: fatheroetjen@stjamescatholic.org

Love in a Pandemic. Congratulations to Bailey Bumbarger and Will Cornelius (pictured below with their COVID masks). Clearly, not the wedding they had anticipated. But in its simplicity their wedding highlights what is most important in a marriage: man, woman, and God. May He bless them with a beautiful marriage. (Oh, and the ceremony was done without masks; the groom was able to kiss the bride!)

Through the intercession of our Lady and Saint Joseph, may the Lord bless and keep you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Scalia



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