

Reflection on John 6:51-58

This Sunday's Gospel is a continuation of last Sunday's Gospel. After listening to Jesus preach to the people, the Jews began to argue among themselves. How could Jesus possibly give them his flesh to eat? This was not only ridiculous, it was not at all appealing. Who would even think of eating human flesh?

Jesus then tells the people that they will not have life within if they do not eat his flesh and also drink his blood! However, if they choose to eat Jesus' flesh and blood, they will have eternal life and they also will be raised up on the last day. He adds that anyone who eats his flesh and drinks his blood, they will live forever!

In this reading, the words "flesh and blood" are a Hebrew idiom referring to the whole person. When Jesus speaks of His "flesh and blood," He is not speaking literally. Rather, He is speaking metaphorically. Jesus wants us to understand and believe that when we receive the body and blood of Christ, we truly encounter Jesus in a deeply personal way. When we receive the body and blood of Christ, we truly are in communion with Jesus!

Do we believe and trust that when we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, that in that moment, we truly are receiving Jesus? Receiving the body and blood of Christ is not a "magical" action! Every time we received the body and blood of Christ, Jesus is there! However, we need to be awake and aware of whom we are receiving. If we are on "automatic pilot" when we receive the body and blood of Christ, if we are not awake and alert, we will miss being in full communion with Jesus. What loss that is for us!

Today and every day, may we be alert and awake to the many ways that Jesus comes to us! He is with us every moment!