

### John 6:51-58, 60-69

Jesus said to the crowd: 'I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.' Then the Jews started arguing with one another: 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' they said. Jesus replied: 'I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

After hearing his doctrine many of the followers of Jesus said, 'This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?' Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, 'Does this upset you? What if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before? 'It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh has nothing to offer. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the outset those who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. He went on, 'This is why I told you that no one could come to me unless the Father allows him.' After this, many of his disciples left him and stopped going with him.

Then Jesus said to the Twelve, 'What about you, do you want to go away too?' Simon Peter answered, 'Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.'

## TWENTYFIRST SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Year B

22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021

*To Whom Should We Go, Lord?  
You Have the Words of Eternal Life*



Today, we come to the end of John, Ch. 6, Jesus' revelation as the **Bread of Life**. This has been a journey of faith, which we are all invited to make.

It began with the feeding of the 5,000. Afterward, the crowds come searching for Jesus, not because they have recognised him, but because he fed them. He tells them not to search for earthly things, but to work for food that gives eternal life. Jesus then reveals himself as the Bread of Life, but the crowds remain blind & Jesus teaches that no one can come to him, unless the Father draws them. To come to life in the Lord, we must first receive the Father's Word into our hearts.

As we come to the end of the chapter, we must make a decision: Is Jesus' teaching rubbish, or true? For if it is true, then the Eucharist – meeting the Lord & sharing his life - must become the very centre and focus of our lives here on earth. Do you want to leave me? Let us make Peter's profession of faith: '**Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life & we believe. We know you are the Holy one of God.**'

### Opening Prayer

*God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found.*

**Joshua 24:1-2,15-18**

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem; then he called the elders, leaders, judges and scribes of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. Then Joshua said to all the people, 'If you will not serve the Lord, choose today whom you wish to serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are now living. As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.'

The people answered, 'We have no intention of deserting the Lord and serving other gods! Was it not the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery, who worked those great wonders before our eyes and preserved us all along the way we travelled and among all the peoples through whom we journeyed? What is more, the Lord drove all those peoples out before us, as well as the Amorites who used to live in this country. We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God.'

**Psalms 33(34):2-3,16-23**

*I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise always on my lips; in the Lord my soul shall make its boast. The humble shall hear and be glad.*

*The Lord turns his face against the wicked to destroy their remembrance from the earth. The Lord turns his eyes to the just and his ears to their appeal.*

*They call and the Lord hears and rescues them in all their distress. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; those whose spirit is crushed he will save.*

*Many are the trials of the just man but from them all the Lord will rescue him. He will keep guard over all his bones, not one of his bones shall be broken.*

*Evil brings death to the wicked; those who hate the good are doomed. The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants. Those who hide in him shall not be condemned.*

**Ephesians 5:21-32**

Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything. Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body – and we are its living parts. For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.

**Alleluia, alleluia!** Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life; you have the message of eternal life. **Alleluia!**

*(Gospel overleaf)*

**Prayer over the Offerings**

*O Lord, who gained for yourself a people by adoption through the one sacrifice offered once for all, bestow graciously on us, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace in your Church.*

**Prayer after Communion**

*Complete within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you.*