

**Intimacy with God**    Third Week of Easter    Friday, April 20, 2018    7:30 PM    Acts 9:1-20;    **Jn 6:52-59**    Healing Mass    (In Baptism we receive this precious gift of life, which is nourished by the flesh and the blood of the Lord.)

**“Jesus said to them, ‘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.’”**

Very often, especially in the Fourth Gospel, we see misunderstandings about the meanings of words; and **this word “life” doesn’t always mean the same thing.** We see this already in the beginning of the Bible in the Book of Genesis, when God tells Adam and Eve—and this is just a story mind you, but it’s a story that instructs us about the real relationship we have with God, or don’t. So in the story, God tells Adam and Eve, representing all of us, “If you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will die.” And the serpent says, “If you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you surely will not die.” Well, of course they are each speaking a truth. **The life that God is talking about is different from the life the serpent is talking about.** And of course the serpent was absolutely correct. Adam and Eve didn’t die in the physical sense. They continued to live and they had children, and many people call this life, but it wasn’t life as God intended. There was something grandly missing because **once they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil no longer did God walk with them in the cool of the evening.** They were expelled from the garden, that delightful place that was made delightful by the presence and intimacy they had with God.

Now of course because God is God **their situation was never really hopeless, but what they were living wasn’t really life.** So now **Jesus has come into the world that the world may have life,** but not just physical existence, but rather **intimacy with God. That’s what real life is.** Now his listeners didn’t understand this. So he is telling them, “You do not have life within you.” And they are saying to themselves, well, of course I have life within me. I’m standing here. I’m breathing. I’m listening. I’m thinking. Yes, that’s all good, but that isn’t life, and that’s the point of this gospel. **“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.”**

Now when we eat the flesh of the Lord, yes, of course **eventually we will physically die, but that won’t be true death, because we will continue to live in God.** We will live the eternal life of God. This is just this wonderful offer God has made really to everybody in the whole world.

And yet **so many people don't understand or don't care**, or don't care to understand. They seem to be perfectly happy with their physical existence, and they are perfectly willing to put all their eggs in that one basket.

Now in this Easter Season we have the opportunity to renew our sense of eternal life. This is not something that we have just because we are born on earth; rather it is a gift from God. The sign of that gift is the sacrament of Baptism. **In Baptism we are reborn; we are begotten from above. We receive this precious gift of life, which is nourished by the flesh and the blood of the Lord.** And it makes possible **a whole new creation that began with the resurrection of Jesus**, a whole new creation **that will continue to grow into infinite eternity.** So this gift is something that is very precious. And not only does God expect us to appreciate it, but to **share it.** Now how we do that, well, we have to **listen very well to God's guidance** because if we try to share this with the wrong person at the wrong time, we may actually even impede their ever listening to it. But it is a great gift and Jesus said, **“What you have received as a gift, give as a gift.”**

So as we come tonight to imbibe, to join together in enjoying the eternal banquet, represented and prophesied by the **Eucharistic bread and the Eucharistic cup**, the body, the blood, the soul, and the divinity of Christ, **Jesus intends this to be of substantial help to our daily life and certainly a source of forgiveness, a source of strength, and a source of healing.** So as we gather, let us keep in mind the needs of all those who have gathered here. **Let us pray for one another.** Whether the burdens we bring are more on the physical level or more on the emotional level or whether they are more spiritual or psychological or whatever they are, let us bear with one another and **join our own sufferings to the sufferings of Jesus**, that he may raise us all up and offer us up with his own suffering to the Father in the sacrifice of praise to the glory of God the Father.