

Promise of Eternal Life Third Week of Easter Friday, April 20, 2018 8:15 AM
Acts 9:1-20; **Jn 6:52-59** (Eternal life will already be with you, and it will come to utter fulfillment on the last day. And that's the promise that is the basis for Christian hope.)

“Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, you do not have life within you.”

Now it's no wonder that the Jews were quarreling, because Jesus is not speaking here in a literal, logical, normal, ordinary way. The issue really has to do with **life, and what does that mean?** He says, “You have no life.” **Well they are living.** They are there breathing, listening, quarreling. Isn't that living? **No, he says; “You have no life.”**

Now you have heard of fake news and alternate news and all that, well, it starts really at the beginning of the Bible. God says to Adam and Eve in the story—now it's a story, but it's a very instructive story. God says to Adam and Eve, “If you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will die.” And the serpent says, “No, you won't die.” Well, **those are two different kinds of death.** Did they actually die in the sense of physically die and were they buried right there? No, no, they continued to live in a way, in a certain way. They lived. They had children; people call that living. But that isn't life in the terms of what God meant, because **they were expelled from the garden, and the garden was life.** The garden was living with God. The garden was about **being intimate with God.** God walked with them in the cool of the evening. When they were expelled, God didn't walk with them anymore; and from God's point of view, that's not living. **So they continued to exist in a physical sense** and have children and eat and drink and all that, **but that's not what life is about.** That's not what God created life for. That is a kind of prison. And these people are imprisoned in their own conception of what living is all about. It's way too small. **It's way too narrow, and Jesus wants them to have more.**

Now his entire mission began with this announcement: **you must learn to think differently**, often translated “repent”—bad word, doesn’t carry the meaning of the Greek, *metanoia*: new thinking, new imagination. Well here is where you need new thinking and new imagination **about what it means to live**. And he says, **“If you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,” an obvious reference to the Eucharist**, if you commune with God in the sacrament I am giving you, then you will have life, and I will raise you up to eternal life on the last day. In fact, **eternal life will already be with you, and it will come to utter fulfillment on the last day. And that’s the promise that is the basis for Christian hope.**

So we live now both a physical existence, but also more. **We have a new life that was born in us in Baptism.** It’s a life generated from above. It is not from the earth. It’s not the result of simply natural processes. It’s really a gift from above, comes in Baptism, and it gives us membership in the risen Christ. **We are really members of the risen Christ.** And the promise that Jesus makes is we will abide in him if we choose to. If we want to, we can abide in him through all eternity, which is of course life without end.