

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**An Intimate Relationship**      Third Week of Easter      Friday, May 10, 2019      Acts  
9:1-20;    **Jn 6:52-59**    (St. Damien de Veuster, priest)    (We know God's desire is to  
incorporate all people into God.)

**“Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.”**

The gospel makes no bones about it: **Jesus intended to establish an intimate relationship with his followers, so intimate that he identifies with them.** So then when Saul was cast down to the ground he heard a voice, “Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Now Saul may have said, what do you mean “you”? I’m persecuting these Christians. But Jesus identified with his own disciples, so that persecuting them was persecuting him. This is the meaning of our Baptism. **We are drawn into the body of Christ.** We are no longer individuals. We are now members in something higher: the body of Christ, a new organism, a living organism **whose blood is the blood of Christ and which affords eternal life.** That is very similar to the meaning of the gospel: Jesus is the bread that has come down from heaven to bring life.

The ancestors of the Hebrews ate manna in the desert, but they all died. Now what does that mean? Their bodies were buried; their memories waited, their souls waited for redemption. And that came through Christ; that’s why he descended into hell, to gather up those who were waiting. **Until the Word became flesh there was no possibility for an eternal communion between humanity and God.** This became possible in the incarnation. And **it’s Jesus’ human nature that we share, that we are baptized into, and that gives this avenue into eternal life and the mind of God, the beatific vision.**

It’s very important we take all this quite seriously and **not dismiss it as figurative speech.** Of course there’s always metaphors being used, but the metaphors are talking about something even more real than the physical reality we live in; and that’s the point. **The world we are living in now**

**is a shadow of things to come**, not the other way around. In so many people's lives their physical reality is what is really real and then, well, there might be something else, there might be something more. Well, no, **what is, is God, and Jesus is God, and Jesus affords us unity with God, and without this we just die.** We have to take this very seriously.

Jesus' work is not confined to the Church; it is not confined to only those who have heard the word. **We know God's desire is to incorporate all people into God.** However, we have to understand that we should never just presume that this is all fine. **God is looking for devotion, acceptance, belief, commitment. We will attain happiness precisely when we find our wills in God's will, not when we try to get God's will to do our will.**