

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (8/15-16/2009)

Proverbs 9/1-6, Psalm 34, Ephesians 5/15-20, John 6/51-58

This is the fourth of our five presentations from *John*, chapter six. One more to go.

Jesus has been calling himself the bread that comes down from heaven.

Now he takes his claim a step further – and a lengthy step it is!

“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...For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink”

There's no painless way around that startling declaration.

Jesus pulls no punches.

We shall see in the final installment next week that many people find it too hard to swallow (no pun intended), and they walk away from Jesus.

A lay friend of mine has a neat story to tell.

I know that he loves the Eucharist, and tries to attend Mass every morning.

Well, at the time he was having his kitchen remodeled a couple of years ago, he was negotiating a minor problem with a subcontractor.

The woman representing the subcontractor on the phone was particularly upset that day and ready for a fight.

My friend didn't wish to make things worse, so he innocently enough asked her name in an effort to move away from confrontation.

She told him, and, to him, it sounded of Italian extraction.

She admitted it was, and he said, “You must be a Catholic then.”

The lady hemmed and hawed a bit and admitted she no longer went to the Catholic Church but was involved with some other denomination.

She also sounded very unhappy.

My friend was used to talking with people like the lady and he told her he knew what she could do to make her life right – return to the Church and receive the Lord once again in Holy Communion.

It was a suggestion she was not exactly expecting from a complaining customer.

While she did not immediately say she would, she did admit she'd like to have a cup of coffee with him and to hear more of his point of view.

I don't know how it all turned out, but I was deeply impressed by his utter conviction that the way to happiness even in this life is through the Eucharist, through eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ.

I should also tell you that this is a man with a large family and more than his share of serious health problems: he understands all about the cross.

So, if Jesus were around today, he'd know that at least one man had gotten the message.

And one lady too, if she was willing to listen.

Of course, we know that my friend is not alone in his strong beliefs; and we know Jesus does not go unheard.

No matter what our logic teaches us about Jesus' Body and Blood, our faith reassures us that he speaks the truth always.