



OUR LADY OF THE LAKE CATHOLIC CHURCH

TWENTIETH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
AUGUST 18, 2024

Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Bread of Life: Be the Bread

Jesus said to the crowds: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

John 6:51

For the past three Sundays, as we have listened to St. John's Gospel chapter 6 and reflected on the Bread of Life discourse—Jesus' teaching and declaration of his divinity, we have focused on our belief in Christ's true and real presence in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus proclaims that his "flesh" is given "for the life of the world" and asserts his intimate connection to the Father. He extends that intimacy to us: "*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.*"

Jesus' flesh and blood pronouncements were shocking to his listeners at the time and caused many to cease following him. We know that many people in our own day and age still have the same difficulty accepting in faith that Jesus is truly present—body, blood, soul, and divinity—in the Holy Eucharist. For them, the Eucharist is simply a symbol of Christ' presence. But here's a simple question: *if the Eucharist is only a symbol of Jesus and not truly the Bread of Life, why should we eat it?* We don't need to consume a symbol. Jesus then—and now—declares "*my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.*"

You Are What You Eat

In our current culture we have become greatly aware of the direct connection between what we eat and drink, and its impact on our overall health and well-being. Consider the growth and availability of sugar-free, gluten-free, and lactose-free foods, or the movement toward plant-based diets that avoid animal proteins. All these, and many other nutritional developments, reflect our diet consciousness, understanding that what we eat and drink, does affect our health in the short and long-term. I imagine we all have a personal story or a family member who became ill because of an unhealthy diet, or regained health by making a major change in what they ate.

Likewise, our spiritual "diet" also impacts our health and well-being. When we choose Christ and accept—in faith—the gift of the Holy Eucharist, we are assimilated into Christ and share in life with the Father. This is the amazing Good News of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—the banquet and sacrifice that we are invited to consume—and then imitate.

Can we become bread for others *through, with, and in Christ*—by sharing ourselves and our gifts for the life of the world?

Transformed by Christ

Partaking in the Holy Eucharist calls us to action. The final commendation at every Mass invites us to mission and to proclaim the Good News. There are many ways that each of us can *be the bread* for others both within the parish as well as in our personal lives. Here are a few invitations to help with parish ministries:

Life Kids and Middle School Ministry

Support. Our Children's and Middle school programs need adults to help with the Sunday sessions as teachers, aides, and logistical support. Can you help pass on the faith to these next generations?

First Sacraments and Confirmation Preparation. Our sacramental preparation programs also take place on Sunday morning after 9am Mass. [See page 3](#) of this bulletin for more information on how you can share your faith with these youth.

Liturgical Ministries. We especially need ushers to serve at all Sunday Masses. Can you offer the gift of "hospitality" and assist parishioners and visitors? Contact me at the parish office if you can help. As our psalm this week declares: *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord!* (Psalm 34)

—Tom Tomaszek, Pastoral Associate

