

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily
June 14, 2020
Solemnity of the Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ (A)

“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood” Jesus declares, “you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life”.

Many were struck by these words of Jesus, especially the Jews who have the greatest reverence for blood as the source of life. To come in contact with blood is immediately to become ritually unclean.

While today we can understand the metaphor, for the Jews, with Jesus alive and talking to them, it is very different. Yet Jesus makes no apologies for what he has said. On the contrary, he tells his hearers that if they do not eat his flesh and drink his blood, they will not have life. Those who do eat and drink are guaranteed eternal life because Jesus' flesh is real food and his blood is real drink. Jesus does not back down even when many of his disciples cannot accept the hard saying and decide to walk away.

What do Jesus's words mean? To eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood is to assimilate totally into our very being the whole way of thinking and acting of Jesus, his very person. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.

In our culture, a saying gives a good insight as to where Jesus is leading us: “You are what you eat”. This is exactly what Jesus wants for us, to become a part of him and to replicate in each part of our life and character his goodness. Our bonding with him, especially by sharing the Eucharist, will give us the grace, the strength, and the energy to grow into his goodness. We come here not only to worship God and thank Him for everything, but also that by receiving Him into our hearts we will become more like Him in many ways, especially the way He loves us all.

That is why the metaphor, is not to be understood only in the context of “receiving communion” at Mass. The Eucharist is a sacrament or sign of a much wider relationship with Jesus. It is primarily a community celebration of what we are – brothers and sisters who are the Body of Christ for each other and for the whole world.

Jesus’s flesh and blood come to us through the Word that we proclaim at each mass or celebration of the Eucharist as well as during the sharing of the Bread and the Cup. But when we gather for Mass, we are changed and transformed by the mystery of his passion, death, and resurrection made present at the Eucharist. Thus as people of the Eucharist we are all called to be the living Eucharist for the world today.

Amen