

Lent Devotional April 4, 2025

Scripture

John 6:52-59

52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; 55 for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. 56 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. 57 Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." 59 He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Devotion

Dr. Charles A. Borek '24

To live in Christ—to abide, dwell, and remain in him, and for Christ to live, abide, dwell, and remain in us—that is the hope of every Christian.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells us exactly how to achieve this—we must eat his flesh and drink his blood! Jesus can't really mean this, can he?

And yet he's insistent: he repeats this admonition to eat his flesh and drink his blood no less than four times! Whatever this means, it's no off-the-cuff remark. Jesus wants us to hear this message loud and clear. There can be no doubt about what he's saying.

We should recall how Jesus taught Nicodemus three chapters earlier. There, Jesus invoked another seemingly preposterous notion (that we must be "born again"), and he repeatedly and explicitly tells Nicodemus how to achieve this. Belief is what is needed, he says (John 3:1-21). Now, Jesus goes about telling us just what that belief entails, and he does so in starkly concrete terms.

The belief Jesus describes is no intellectual exercise. It doesn't come about by thinking great thoughts. Rather, this belief comes by plunging our hands into the bowl, scooping up its contents, and ingesting the sustenance. Belief in Christ is something to be consumed like food. When we eat, we absorb nutrients from the food. What we eat becomes part of us; that which sustained its life becomes sustaining to ours.

And so it is with this radical belief Jesus is calling us to. It's an embodied belief, not just something we have, but something we are. It's a belief that must indwell.

If we are to be reborn, we must believe. If we are to abide in Christ, to dwell in Christ, to remain in Christ, and he in us, this belief means nothing less than eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

Prayer

Jesus, help me to abide, dwell, and remain in you
as you abide, dwell, and remain in me.

Nourish me with your very flesh and blood,
so that it may become part of me.

Help me to indwell you
as you indwell me.

Forever and ever, amen.