

### **The homily on Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

We know that food is necessary for our lives. We can't live without eating and drinking. In the pilgrimage of the Jews to the Promised Land, God gave them manna as daily food for 40 years in the wilderness. Although manna is the food from heaven, it only took care of their bodies, it could not bring eternal life to them.

Continuing the Gospels of the previous three Sundays, Jesus teaches people the difference between the decaying food and the living bread from heaven. Today's Gospel, Jesus promised to give the Jews another food from heaven and would bring eternal life to them. The living bread is his own Body and Blood. Jesus affirmed: "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." (Jn 6:51) That's what the Jewish people argued with each other after listening to Jesus saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" It is really hard to believe that an ordinary person can give his flesh as food to others.

In the book "The story of a Soul", there is a story of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and Céline, her sister. One day, Celine asked Theresa: "How can Christ be in the small bread?" Theresa answered: "It is not hard, for God is the Almighty." Céline continued, "What does the Almighty mean?" Theresa replied quickly: "It means He can do whatever He wants!" The response was wonderful.

Jesus is God the Almighty. If the Jews did not accept Jesus' revelation, they cannot believe Jesus gave them his own flesh, then Theresa, a childlike soul – a little one, was revealed by God and understood this great mystery. In the eyes of the Jews at the time, Jesus was just a carpenter, he could not have been the One from heaven. And so, they put themselves in a narrow gaze; and they could not open their heart to receive the Lord's teachings. (cf. Jn 6,45).

The word of God in the Book of Proverbs, in the first reading, helps us to understand more deeply the meaning of Jesus' words: "Wisdom has built her house ... she has dressed her meat, mixed her wine, she has spread her table. She has sent out her maidens; she calls from the heights out over the city: 'Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed!'" Wisdom here is the image of God.

Jesus is the Son of God, sent by God to save us. He reveals to the Jews that He is the "living bread from heaven", the very source of life. "Whoever eats this bread will live forever." (Jn 6:58)

We go to masses. We have received the Eucharist in our souls. The Lord has sanctified our souls, opened our hearts to love God and others. How happy we are when the Almighty God comes into our souls and stay with us in our lives.

Think about that. Reflect on that. We are happier than the Jews because today we grow in the heart of the Church; and we have inherited the pure and holy faith from the Church. And the Jews met and heard Jesus every day. They believed that Jesus was a very ordinary person, a carpenter, a neighbor. We are luckier than them right!

I remember that once I invited my best friend to go to a mass. While he saw people receiving the Holy Communion, he asked me: "Is Jesus in the bread?" His question helped me to reflect back: "Is the host truly Jesus?" At that time, I just realized that "Uh huh, I know the Catechism. I think I believe in God, in the Eucharist. And how many years I have received Holy Communion but why is his question so confusing to me now? Looking back at my attitude to the Eucharist, I was startled. I used to receive the Holy Communion as just a habit. How unworthy I am?"

Therefore, by love Jesus became man, died for us, and stayed in the Holy Communion to nourish our souls. What is our attitude when we receive Jesus? Is it joy, excitement, happiness or just indifference? If we are indifferent, we don't believe the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. The Lord is a precious guest but He has not been welcomed and received worthily. Perhaps, we don't believe our Lord is present in the Eucharist.

Finally, Jesus is present in the Eucharist as he confirmed: "Whoever eats this bread will live forever". In the presence of this wonderful mystery, let us imitate the disciples of Jesus and invoke the Lord: "Lord, increase our small faith, so we can receive your word and the Holy Communion and approach the eternal life." Amen.