

Sunday Homily
20th Sunday Ordinary Time B
August 16, 2009
Proverbs 9:1-6, Ephesians 5:15-20, John 6:51-58

Did you ever wonder about the Eucharist? Sometimes we may wonder “why”?

We might wonder why Jesus chose a simple piece of bread, and the smallest sip of wine to become the most important thing in the world – the Living Bread come down from Heaven. How can this be? Well, it is all in God’s plan so that we can abide in Him.

To understand God’s plan for us we have to begin at the beginning with Adam and Eve. They were created by God, just like us with free will. They lived in a perfect place where all their needs were met. They were in full communion with God. God knew them, and they knew their God. Life was indeed perfect. And then the Devil tested them, just like he tests us today.

“You can be just like God you know, all you have to do is disobey God”, a tempting offer to be sure for both Eve and Adam, and a tempting offer to be sure for us today. Adam and Eve bit hard on this lie of the Devil and in doing so separated themselves and us from communion with God. And right then and there, God knew His plan to bring us back into communion with Him – He would send His only Son.

“...and by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary and became Man...For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilot; he suffered, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures...”

Jesus tells us today in John that *“I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever.”*

“...He has spoken through the prophets...”

During the time of the Old Covenant before Jesus was born, we hear in Proverbs of God’s plan to come: “Wisdom has built her house of seven columns”. Wisdom with a capital “W” is God and her house of seven columns is the Church that Jesus gave us with our seven sacraments.

“...we believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church...”

Jesus tells us “the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” He offered His Body for us then and He offers His Body for us today so that we can be in communion with Him and the Father. This is God’s plan as it always has been and always will be.

Listen to what St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the Church in the year 107 A.D. while a captive on his journey to Rome where he was to be martyred:

“Take care, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to show for the unity of His Blood; one altar, as there is one bishop, along with the priests and deacons, my fellow-servants.” As he was led into the coliseum to be killed by the lions, he exclaimed, *“May I become agreeable bread to the Lord.”*

St. Ignatius only taught what had always been known to be true: that Jesus Christ is truly present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the consecrated bread and wine.

St. Paul offers us his advice to *“watch carefully how we live. Try to understand the will of the Lord.”*

Today, in a few minutes, we will offer our gifts of bread and wine. We too can also offer all of ourselves in the hope that we may become agreeable bread to the Lord. I invite each of us today; maybe for the first time in a long time, to lay all of whom we are on the altar together with the bread and wine. Let us offer God our hopes and our fears and ambitions, our good deeds, and our failures.

And then as Jesus, in the person of His priest, transforms this simple bread and wine into Himself, may He transform our lives and make them holy as we abide in Him through the Eucharist.

Yes, to wonder can mean to doubt, but to wonder can also mean to be filled with awe. May we be filled with wonder as we receive our Lord Jesus Christ truly present in the Eucharist today!