

**The Bread of Life Discourse II (John 6, Part 4)
(20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)**

Proverbs 9:1-6—The Bread and Wine of Lady Wisdom

1. Wisdom: lady “wisdom” (Hebrew *hokmah*; Greek *sophia*) (9:1)
2. Table: she has “set her table” (9:2)
3. Bread and Wine: “eat of my bread and drink of the wine I’ve mixed” (9:5)

Psalm 34—Taste and See the Goodness of the Lord

1. Doxology: “I will bless the LORD at all times...” (v. 1)
2. Answered Prayer: “the poor man cried, and the LORD heard him...” (v. 6)

Ephesians 5:15-20—Understand what the Will of the Lord Is

1. Drunkenness: *prohibited* for Christians (5:18)
2. Spiritual Inebriation: but be “filled with the Spirit” (5:18)

John 6:51-58—The Bread of Life Discourse II

1. Bread of Life Discourse, Part 2 (6:48-58)
 - a. Begins with the words “I am the bread of life” (6:48)
 - c. Focuses on “eating” (Greek *esthiō*) Jesus’ “flesh” (6:50)
2. Jewish Response: “*How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*” (6:52)
3. Jesus Responds:
 - a. Flesh: “unless you *eat the flesh* of the Son of man” (6:53)
 - b. Blood: “unless you *drink his blood*, you have no *life*” (6:53, cf. Lev 17:11)
 - c. Eternal Life: whoever “eats” and “drinks” has eternal life
 - d. Resurrection: resurrection of the *body* (not just immortality of the soul)
 - e. Realism: “real (Greek *alēthēs*) food” and “real (Greek *alēthēs*) drink” (cf. NIV)
 - f. New Manna: the Eucharist is “the bread which came down from heaven” (6:58)

For *the life* (Hebrew *nephesh*; Greek *psychē*) *of the flesh is in the blood*; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life. Therefore I have said to the sons of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood. (Leviticus 17:11-12)

The Catechism on the Real Presence

The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as “the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend.” In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist “*the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ* and, therefore, *the whole Christ* is truly, really, and substantially contained.” “This presence is called ‘real’—by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could

not be ‘real’ too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present.” (CCC 1374)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. How does Lady Wisdom’s banquet of bread and wine prefigure the Eucharistic banquet of Christ?

2. Why does Jesus say we have to drink his “blood” when the consumption of animal “blood” is prohibited in Leviticus 17:11? Is Jesus ‘breaking’ the Law?

3. What are the implications of the identification of the Eucharist as the New Manna for the Church’s doctrine of the Real Presence?

For Further Study

1. Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* (New York: Image, 2011), 75-115. A close analysis of John 6 in the light of the Old Testament and ancient Jewish traditions about the Messiah, the new Moses, and the new Manna from heaven.
2. James T. O’Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005). An absolutely fantastic study of the Eucharistic theology of the Church Fathers and the living magisterium. Must-reading.