

# THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (John 6:51-58)

## *I AM THE LIVING BREAD*

People found His teaching hard to accept,  
They left Him one by one very upset.  
“How can He give His flesh for us to eat?”  
Some thought He was a false Teacher and cheat.

The crowd could only think of earthly food,  
By miracle He gave them fish and bread.  
People had plenty to eat and to spare,  
Their stomachs full, they were all in good cheer.

They sought Him again on the second day,  
Food was their main concern, Jesus would say.  
Warned them to work for food imperishable,  
To grasp His teaching they were unable.

They could not fathom the Bread from heaven,  
Nor did they understand Him as God’s Son.  
Mary and Joseph were His parents they knew,  
He couldn’t be great, the conclusion they drew.

The twelve apostles, too, were ready to quit,  
They thought it was hard for them to commit.  
Peter saved the twelve with the right answer,  
Jesus is the Eternal life, they knew for sure.

Jesus, the Eternal Manna, is our Bread,  
For our souls as we spiritually tread-  
Toward our everlasting blessedness,  
With God our Father where there’s no sadness.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. If you were to be in the crowd listening to Jesus, how would you have reacted?
2. What is your reaction now? What do you believe is the Eucharist?

### **REFLECTIONS:**

Jesus had a perfect setting in which to teach people a very important, and at the same time, a very controversial subject: “I AM THE LIVING BREAD.” The day before He talked about it, He had fed five thousand or more hungry people. They had come from far and near, and some of them had walked many miles to listen to Him. In their eagerness and hurry to come and listen to Him, they likely had forgotten to bring food with them. It may also be that the teaching of Jesus was so inspiring and interesting that they remained with Him longer than they had previously anticipated. They were hungry and without provisions, and Jesus knew it. Ever compassionate and loving, He did not want to send them home with empty stomachs. He fed them by multiplying bread and fish. They could not believe what they saw, as they never witnessed anything like that in their lives. The multiplication of the bread became a hot topic among the villagers. Emotionally charged, they wanted to make Him their king. In unison they acclaimed Him as “the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world” (John 6:14).

The crowd searched for Jesus again in Capernaum. When they found Him, they told Him how much they had missed Him and how much they yearned to listen to Him. “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Knowing their hearts and thoughts, Jesus told them that they were looking for Him not because they saw the power of God working through His Son but instead, He challenged them, saying they were only looking for more food. He seized the opportunity to instruct them on the Living Bread, which is everlasting and imperishable. He said, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and

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**MESSAGE  
FROM  
FR. ANTONY**

whoever believes in me will never thirst” (John 6:35). At this, the people grew angry and began to murmur and grumble against Him, asking “How could He give us His own Body and Blood?” Their thinking was limited to their earthly experience, and they could not understand the spiritual dimensions that Jesus had miraculously opened to them. Jesus had literally appeared before them, opening eternity and the gates of heaven for mankind. They failed to recognize this immeasurable gift from God. Sensing the confusion and uncertainty among even His chosen apostles, He asked them if they too would leave Him, as the people had just done. If it were not for their spokesperson Peter, they might have left Him. Peter’s immediate intervention was, “To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have to come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:69). They stayed with Him, and through their simple action and partnership with God, helped mankind form a connection with Jesus, the Bread of Life. By their example, we now have a model to follow, and remaining with Jesus is our calling. We can experience Jesus in the Eucharist we receive during Mass and, just as importantly, with the graces open to us through Eucharistic Adoration.

Like the people who met Jesus, we struggle to understand and accept the presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Our intellect cannot explain the change that takes place during the Eucharist when bread and wine are transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ, ceasing to be bread and wine once this happens. As St. Thomas Aquinas observed, Christ is not quoted as saying, “This bread is my body”, but rather “This is my body” (Luke 22:19). We can understand only through the eyes of faith. The only reason Jesus gives Himself to us in the Eucharist as spiritual nourishment is because He loves us. Eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ unite us to the person of Christ through His humanity. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in Him” (John 6:56).

There are many Eucharistic miracles reported from all over the world. A recent documented account of a Eucharistic Miracle took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1996, under the leadership of Cardinal Bergoglio, now Pope Francis. At seven o’clock in the evening on August 18, 1996, Fr. Alejandro Pezet was saying Holy Mass at a Catholic Church in the commercial center of Buenos Aires. As he was finishing distributing Holy Communion, a woman came up to tell him that she had found a discarded host on a candleholder at the back of the church. When he went to see, Fr. Alejandro saw the defiled Host. Since he was unable to consume it, he placed it in a container of water and put it away in the tabernacle of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. On Monday, August 26, upon opening the tabernacle, he saw to his amazement that the Host had turned into a bloody substance. He informed Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, who gave instructions that the Host be professionally photographed. The photos were taken on September 6. They clearly showed that the Host, which had become a fragment of bloodied flesh, had grown significantly in size. For several years the Host remained in the tabernacle, the whole affair being kept a strict secret. Since the Host suffered no visible decomposition, Cardinal Bergoglio decided to have it scientifically analyzed. One of the scientists who got involved was Dr. Frederic Zugiba, the well-known cardiologist and forensic pathologist. He determined that the analyzed substance was real flesh and blood containing human DNA. Zugiba testified that, “the analyzed material is a fragment of the heart muscle found in the wall of the left ventricle close to the valves.”

“To whom shall we go?” To whom do we go? To the almighty dollar? To our earthly comforts? To gurus or charismatic political leaders? To sin? Do we elevate ourselves and try to make ourselves God? Look in your heart. No matter where you go, you can never fill the hunger in your heart, which can only be satisfied with the presence of God. Therefore Jesus calls Himself the Bread of Life. As he sent the crowds home satisfied with food in their stomachs, he is ready to send you home with your heart filled with eternal life and to send you home to the Lord one day, united to Him through His Body and Blood. How will you answer His challenge? To whom shall you go?

I would like to end with something Mother Teresa of Calcutta said about the Eucharist: “Eucharist is the presence of Jesus, and this presence becomes a ‘present’ to us when we receive Him in the Holy Communion. If we meditate on this great mystery, we will deepen our Eucharist devotion. Our Sunday participation in the Holy Mass will no longer be just an observance of the Sabbath. Rather, it becomes the fountain of our spiritual nourishment.”

(If you haven’t had the chance to visit a Eucharistic Miracle exhibit, I highly recommend it. You can read many of the accounts online at the Real Presence Eucharistic Education and Adoration Association website. Click on the “English” tab and scroll down until you see “Miracles by Country”. Each of those hyperlinks opens to PDFs of various documented, Church-verified accounts of Eucharistic Miracles).