

Sunday Readings

19th August 2018

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Ephesians

5:15-20

Be very careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent and not like senseless people. This may be a wicked age, but you redeem it. And do not be thoughtless but recognise what is the will of the Lord. Do not drug yourselves with wine, this is simply dissipation; be filled with the Spirit. Sing the words and tunes of the psalms and hymns when you are together, and go on singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts, so that always and everywhere you are giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation

Jn 1:12:14

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Word was made flesh and lived among us;

To all who did accept him

He gave power to become children of God.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 6:51-58

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the Jews:

‘I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.’

Then the Jews started arguing with one another: ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ they said. Jesus replied:

‘I tell you most solemnly,

if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you.

Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him.

As I, who am sent by the living Father,

myself draw life from the Father,

so whoever eats me will draw life from me.

This is the bread come down from heaven;

not like the bread our ancestors ate:

they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer after Communion

Made partakers of Christ through these Sacraments, we humbly implore your mercy, Lord, that, conformed to his image on earth, we may merit also to be his coheirs in heaven. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Collect

O God, who have prepared for those who love you good things which no eye can see, fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love, so that, loving you in all things and above all things, we may attain your promises, which surpass every human desire. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Proverbs

9:1-6

Wisdom has built herself a house,
she has erected her seven pillars,
she has slaughtered her beasts, prepared her wine,
she has laid her table.

She has despatched her maidservants
and proclaimed from the city’s heights:

‘Who is ignorant? Let him step this way.’

To the fool she says,

‘Come and eat my bread,

drink the wine I have prepared!

Leave your folly and you will live,

walk in the ways of perception.’

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 33:2-3.10-15. R/. v.9

R/. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

I will bless the Lord at all times,

his praise always on my lips;

in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.

The humble shall hear and be glad. **R/.**

Revere the Lord, you his saints.

They lack nothing, those who revere him.

Strong lions suffer want and go hungry

but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing. **R/.**

Come, children, and hear me

that I may teach you the fear of the Lord.

Who is he who longs for life

and many days, to enjoy his prosperity? **R/.**

Then keep your tongue from evil

and your lips from speaking deceit.

Turn aside from evil and do good;

seek and strive after peace. **R/.**

The Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year B

the word of god

saint of the week

'I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.'

Today we continue reading from the sixth chapter of the gospel of John, which interrupts our regular reading of Mark's gospel on the ordinary Sundays of Year B. This is an opportunity to reflect on the words of Jesus about the Bread of Life, and indeed about the mystery of the Eucharist.

In today's passage the focus is on eating the flesh of Jesus. The Eucharist has throughout the ages been a source of controversy and misunderstanding. Many people have echoed the question of the Jews in this passage 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'

In speaking of his flesh and blood which he gives to us, Jesus is employing a metaphor for his very self. Just as he gave himself in bread and wine to the disciples as a sign of his coming gift of his life on the Cross, so whenever we celebrate the Eucharist we receive the real Jesus, his 'body, blood, soul and divinity', his full self, but in such a way that the real gift is hidden beneath the physical appearances of bread and wine.

Sharing in the Eucharist brings intimacy with Jesus: 'he lives in me and I live in him'. This intimacy is the pledge of eternal life. The ultimate focus is on the gift of life. As Jesus draws life from the Father, so we draw life from Jesus in the Eucharist.

prayer of the week

A Prayer of St Bernard of Clairvaux (The Memorare)

REMEMBER, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Monday 20 August 2018

St Bernard of Clairvaux
(1090 - 1153)



He was born near Dijon, in France, in 1090, of a noble family. In 1112 he joined the new monastery at Cîteaux. This had been founded fourteen years before, in a bid to reject the laxity and riches of the Benedictine Order (as exemplified by great monasteries such as Cluny) and to return to a primitive poverty and austerity of life.

Bernard arrived at Cîteaux with four of his five brothers and two dozen friends. Within three years he had been sent out to found a new monastery at Clairvaux, in Champagne, where he remained abbot for the rest of his life. By the time of his death, the Cistercian Order had grown from one house to 343, of which 68 were daughter houses of Clairvaux itself.

Bernard was a man of great holiness and wisdom, and although he was often in very poor health, he was active in many of the great public debates of the time. He strongly opposed the luxurious lives of some of the clergy, and fought against the persecution of the Jews. He was also a prolific writer, of an inspiring rather than a technical kind.

The last years of Bernard's life were saddened by the failure of the crusaders, the entire responsibility for which was thrown upon him. Bernard died at age 63, after 40 years spent in the cloister. He was the first Cistercian monk placed on the calendar of saints, and was canonized by Pope Alexander III on 18 January 1174.

In 1830, Pope Pius VIII bestowed upon Bernard the title "Doctor of the Church".