

# TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

Proverbs 9:1-6  
Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7  
Ephesians 5:15-20  
John 6:51-58

## Gathering

*(A candle, a bible, open to this week's gospel and a loaf of bread rest on a table in the gathering place.)*

This week we continue to hear the bread of life discourse from the gospel of John. Jesus offers himself to us as “true food” and “true drink.”

## Prayer

*(The candle is lit. The leader calls the community to silent communion with God. After a time of quiet, the prayer continues as follows.)*

Leader: Lord you give us yourself in the Eucharist. Let this simple loaf of bread be a symbol of your presence here among us. Your body was broken just as the grain was crushed to make the flour of this loaf. Your body was transformed in your resurrection. Help us to die and rise with you. Transform us, Lord, with the bread of life and let this daily bread be for us a sign of the nourishment you are for us and a sign of our friendship and unity in you. In the one Spirit, we pray.

All: Amen.

*(The bread is shared among the members of the community while some instrumental music plays.)*

## HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

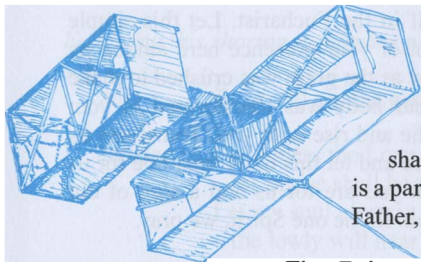
*(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them,*

*but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.*

*When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. The leader then poses these questions: “What draws you to this gospel?” “Where do you resist this gospel?” The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After additional time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)*

## Reflection

There are many Christian denominations that look at the words of our gospel today merely as metaphor. They tell us that when Jesus said, “For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink,” he really meant to say, “The bread is *like* my flesh; the wine is *like* my blood.” But he didn’t. The bread and wine that we offer in sacrifice at the Eucharist get their substance and meaning from the actual presence of Jesus Christ. They don’t require us to add meaning to the bread and wine by seeing them as a symbol of the Body and Blood of Christ, they *are* the Body and Blood of Christ.



And if we feed on the flesh and blood of Christ, what is the nutritional value? Eternal! He fills us now with his life and will raise us up on the last day to dwell in the Lord’s house forever. Our sharing in the life of Christ in the Eucharist is a participation in the communion life of God, Father, Son and Spirit.

The Father withholds nothing from Christ – the Father will withhold nothing from us. Food is ordinarily transformed into us. Through the Eucharist, we are given the grace – the strength – to become what we eat.

Living this grace, this energy, in prayer, we can seek the spiritual path in our lives and open our hearts to the truths God reveals to us. Living this grace, we will share our material and spiritual assets with others through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Living this grace, we will be able to work for justice and peace so that God may be “all in all”.

## Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ Speak of a time when you really enjoyed fresh bread.
- ◆ How present are you to the Eucharist?
- ◆ If you had to defend your belief in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, what would you say?
- ◆ Mention some time when you have been strengthened and energized by the Eucharist to do something you might not have otherwise been able to do.

## HEARING THE GOSPEL'S LORD

*(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: "What do you hear Christ saying to us in hearing and sharing his word?" "What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?" "How are you/we being called to live in response to God's word?" After a pause, the leader invites the community to conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)*

## Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Seek out someone you know and share your beliefs with them about the Eucharist. Invite the person to share with you.
- ◆ During past year numerous people throughout the world have been ravaged by natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, cyclones and tornados. Contact Catholic Relief Services in your area to see how you may offer some assistance. Pray for these victims as well. To contact CRS nationally, call 800-608-5978.
- ◆ Set aside ten minutes a day for prayer in the week ahead at a time when you feel hungry. Let your prayer be one of asking Christ to be the nourishment you most deeply need.

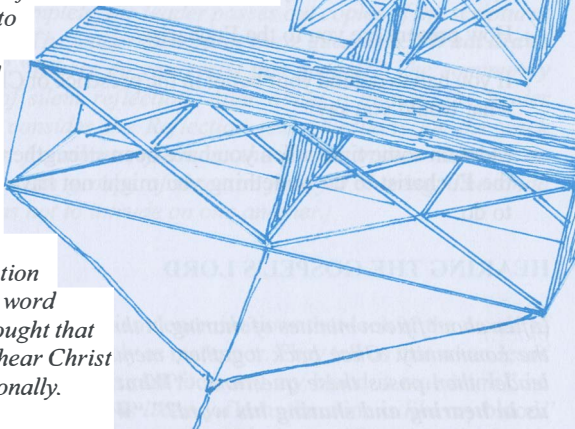
## Prayer

*(After a brief pause, the gospel of the week is re-proclaimed by a member of the community. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: "What does Christ in his Spirit say to you*

*now?” “What do you say to him in response?”*

*The community pauses for a full five, perhaps even seven, minutes of prayerful attention to God.*

*A brief instrumental may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members without additional conversation simply to mention a word or two or a brief thought that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally.*



*Following this sharing, members join in singing, “I Am the Bread of Life” See Internet. When the song is complete, the prayer continues:*

Leader: Jesus, you are the nourishment that sustains us through life. Jesus, you are the nourishment that sustains us to Everlasting Life. We ask you to give us the strength to use the grace that we receive to exercise our spirit in ways that will bring us and others to eternal life.

*(Members offer prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition. To each petition, the community responds, “Strengthen us, Lord.”)*

Leader: Lord, we thank you for the strength that you give us. We ask you to hear our prayers and be with us as we strive to become more like you. In the one Spirit, we pray.

All: Amen.

*(The session concludes with the exchange of a sign of peace.)*