

## Pentecost 13, 23/8/2015, Holy Trinity

## John 6:56-69

At the time for the Communion of the People of God in this Eucharist, you come forward; stand in front of the priest with outstretched hands.

The priest then places the consecrated bread into your hand with words like “The Body of Christ” and after this the other words ring out, “The Blood of Christ”.

This is the sacrament in which Jesus’ body and blood are offered, in a mysterious way, to believers to be eaten and drunk.

It is through eating his flesh and drinking his blood that we abide in him and he in us.

This is a way to common union with Jesus and through him with the Father, thus any who receive his flesh and blood take the life of God into themselves.

Those who eat the true bread from heaven, the bread of life in Jesus, will live forever.

This is what John is telling us in the first part of to-day’s Gospel reading.

This is one of the things that Fr. Brian pointed out towards the end of his last sermon to us.

I am, you are a people of the Word and Sacrament and this is one thing that we must maintain under our next incumbent.

We are a people who study the Word of Scripture and who live a sacramental life.

The second part of this morning’s Gospel tells us of the parting of the ways; the division that arises among the disciples of Jesus following this part of Jesus’ teaching.

John is writing of a much larger group than the Twelve.

These are the ones who have followed Jesus, saw the feeding of the five thousand, witnessed Jesus’ healings, listened to his teaching and entered into the debate and who now are grumbling and murmuring and find it difficult to come to terms with Jesus speaking about coming down from heaven to bring us life, a life that is fed with his Body and Blood, a life that will be lifted up on a cross and will be exalted in the resurrection and ascension back to the Father.

This will force the grumbling disciples to make a final decision.

Some will accept his claims as true and for others it will be the last straw.

To-day, Jesus can give his flesh for people and speak the words of life, but the decision is theirs to make.

For some, it will be too hard to accept and believe and they will walk away unaware of God's continual love for them.

For others, they will accept and believe and continue to feed on Jesus in Word and Sacrament and live life in the continual love of God.

The questions that arise from this section include "Where do I stand?"

"What kind of disciple am I? Am I really willing every day to learn at the school of Jesus, to receive his teaching?"

Now we come to the third part of this morning's Gospel.

Among those who remain with Jesus is the Twelve.

They are prepared to stand up and say aloud that Jesus is God's holy one, the Messiah, who is not only speaking of God's new age, but is in the process of bringing the new age into existence.

"You're the One who's got the words of eternal life".

At that moment the Twelve represent to Jesus those, including millions of every generation and us to-day, who have faith, belief that he is the Messiah who brings about God's new age where the whole world is free from sin and death.

This section of the Gospel also leads to questions for me.

Do I answer Jesus' personal invitation "Come to me and follow me!" every day, in the ups and down situations of my life, in the presence of others? To whom do I go? To whom do I turn? Whose footsteps am I following?

Now to sum up our questions: Am I a person of the Word of God and the Sacraments?

What kind of a disciple am I?

When the going gets tough to whom do I go? To whom do I turn?

Jesus, who comes to us in Word and Sacrament, is the One who's got the words of eternal life.