

GOSPEL

John 6:51-58

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.'

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCES (EXCERPT)

18 June 2017

Today, to each of us, the word of God says, Remember! Remembrance of the Lord's deeds guided and strengthened his people's journey through the desert; remembering all that the Lord has done for us is the foundation of our own personal history of salvation. Remembrance is essential for faith, as water is for a plant. A plant without water cannot stay alive and bear fruit. Nor can faith, unless it drinks deeply of the memory of all that the Lord has done for us. "Remember Jesus Christ".

Remember. Memory is important, because it allows us to dwell in love, to be mind-ful, never forgetting who it is who loves us and whom we are called to love in return. Yet nowadays, this singular ability that the Lord has given us is considerably weakened. Amid so much frantic activity, many people and events seem to pass in a whirl. We quickly turn the page, looking for novelty while unable to retain memories. Leaving our memories behind and living only for the moment, we risk remaining ever on the surface of things, constantly in flux, without going deeper, without the

broader vision that reminds us who we are and where we are going. In this way, our life grows fragmented, and dulled within.

Yet today's Solemnity reminds us that in our fragmented lives, the Lord comes to meet us with a loving "fragility", which is the Eucharist. In the Bread of Life, the Lord comes to us, making himself a humble meal that lovingly heals our memory, wounded by life's frantic pace of life. The Eucharist is the memorial of God's love. There, "[Christ's] sufferings are remembered" (II Vespers, antiphon for the Magnificat) and we recall God's love for us, which gives us strength and support on our journey. This is why the Eucharistic commemoration does us so much good: it is not an abstract, cold and superficial memory, but a living remembrance that comforts us with God's love. A memory that is both recollection and imitation. The Eucharist is flavoured with Jesus' words and deeds, the taste of his Passion, the fragrance of his Spirit. When we receive it, our hearts are overcome with the certainty of Jesus' love. In saying this, I think in particular of you boys and girls, who recently received First Holy Communion, and are here today in great numbers.

The Eucharist gives us a grateful memory, because it makes us see that we are the Father's children, whom he loves and nourishes. It gives us a free memory, because Jesus' love and forgiveness heal the wounds of the past, soothe our remembrance of wrongs experienced and inflicted. It gives us a patient memory, because amid all our troubles we know that the Spirit of Jesus remains in us. The Eucharist encourages us: even on the roughest road, we are not alone; the Lord does not forget us and whenever we turn to him, he restores us with his love.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



Head: Drawing on the reflection by Pope Francis, how does memory provide a life-giving place in your life, especially connected with faith?



Heart: How does the phrase, 'the one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him', make you feel, what is your reaction?



Hands: In what ways could you enter more deeply into the memory of Jesus' life in order to find him alive and active in your own life?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.