

## THE BREAD OF LIFE

During his earthly life, Jesus more than once wanted to reassure his disciples that, although a time would come when he would have to leave and return to the Father, nevertheless he would remain with them in special ways. For example: *“Whoever serves me... will be with me wherever I am.”* (John 12:26); *“I shall not leave you orphans”* (John 14:18); to the one who loves him and keeps his word, Jesus promised *that he and the Father will dwell in him* (John 14:23). He also told them that *“where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among you”*. When he sent them out to preach all over the world, Jesus promised: *“...I am with you always, yes, to the end of time”* (Matthew 28:20).

Our Lord Jesus was not content about remaining spiritually present among his disciples in the ways we just described: ***“on the night he was betrayed he himself took bread... said the blessing, broke the bread... saying ‘TAKE THIS AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU. Do this in memory of me’*** (Eucharistic prayer 3).

Just like the ones he had spoken to the Jews (John 6:32-66), these words were mysterious and difficult to comprehend: ***“the bread that I will give for the life of the world is MY FLESH” (!!!)***. The people listening to these words could not accept the literal meaning that Jesus gave to them. Actually he kept on repeating the same concept (***“my flesh is TRUE food, my blood is TRUE drink”***) more than five times, so much so that many of his disciples said to one another: ***“this is intolerable language. How can anyone accept it? - ...many of them went away and accompanied him no more”*** (John 6:59, 66).

The apostles tell us that Jesus did not back away from the teaching about the bread and wine becoming **his REAL BODY, BLOOD, SOUL and DIVINITY**; in fact he invited them to leave as well. Peter, the first Pope, responded for the group: ***“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”*** (John 6:68).

Since then the Church has continued to pass on to the whole world the teaching that the bread and wine blessed (consecrated) during Mass by the Priest become the **REAL PRESENCE** of the Risen Lord and God Jesus Christ. Therefore Jesus was able to satisfy the human desire to experience in a visible and tangible way his risen Body just as the apostles had done in the Cenacle. But if this were not enough, we Catholics are also privileged to eat the Body of Jesus under the form of bread. This is the greatest miracle that occurs in all Catholic churches every time Mass is being celebrated by a Catholic priest.

*We should be grateful and in awe for this awesome, supernatural gift. Angels and Saints lay prostrate in adoration of the most Blessed Sacrament in our churches. We would do well to imitate them, and join them in thanksgiving, praise and worship. We owe our God honour and glory, for humbling himself to become our spiritual food for our eternal life. Spending time in the Eucharistic presence can transform lives, stop natural calamities, heal diseases, emotional and spiritual wounds, mend broken relationships and restore physical health.*

***“My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You! I ask pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You!”*** (Prayer taught by the Angel to the 3 children at Fatima)

