



COMMUNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

“THROUGH TRUST AND WORK”

An Apostolate of the Institute of the Good Shepherd

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mass of Saint John the Baptist, 24th June (anniversary of Father Murphy) is at 6pm. **A celebration is organised for Saturday 27th at 5pm at the Emmanuel Centre.** Details to follow.
- Fr Murphy will be away midday 29th – evening 30th June, Mass on the 30th will be at 6pm. The rest of the schedule is as usual.
- **Term 2 continues.** *This week: Bethany, St. Aloysius, St. Thomas, St. Therese.*

THE PRIEST AND HIS PEOPLE

PART 7: THE BREAD OF LIFE

Our Lord’s discourse on the Bread of Life (6:22-71) is powerful, not only because it shocked many of his disciples into abandoning Him, but because it captured something near unbelievable: the infinite God communicating Himself to us through worthless material things like bread. Our Lord referring to Himself as the Bread of Life could be understood in two ways. In one way, our souls are hungry for God, so God feeds our souls with the knowledge of Christ, who says “I am the bread come down from heaven” (Jn 6:51). In another, sacramental way, Christ places Himself in unworthy bread so that we can receive Him by our mouths into our souls. In both cases, we know that something incredible is taking place: God communicates Himself through a seemingly boring, ordinary means. The priest, who comes into physical contact with the Eucharist each day at Mass, is called to imitate this humbling, life-giving power for his faithful. He does this in several ways.

1. ORDINARY OUTSIDE

The first way he does this is by being an ordinary, boring piece of bread. What is more commonplace, more unremarked and taken for granted than bread? Thousands of tonnes of it are baked each morning, to be bought, taken to houses

and eaten by hungry mouths. We might remark on the quality of the expensive sourdough we've got in our hands, but aside from this, only Bread Enthusiast Committee members and gourmands will be dazzled by the sight of a fresh loaf of rye sourdough. Bread sits on the shelf or in the bread bin, then, when hunger comes, it is unceremoniously carved up, toasted or not, buttered, slathered and devoured. Once consumed, everyone goes his way to more interesting things, never thinking again about the bread consumed.

In many ways, our Lord's words on the Bread of Life, speak to the heart of a priest. Inspired by the lives of the saints, he may aspire to monumental works for God, but he soon realizes that the stories he reads always leave out the boring and monotonous parts. For many, the priest, dressed in unusual garb, is a "man of God" or a "man of the cloth," a vaguely mythic talisman from another time, called to be separated from society as part of some privileged class to which very few can obtain access. To others – and this has more traction today – he's just another guy, ordinary on-the-shelf bread; one among many other forms of bread.

And in many ways, this is true; like those around him, *he is ordinary*. He eats, he sleeps, he drinks, he has friends, he has good qualities and bad qualities. He worries about the weather or the political climate, he appreciates the summertime, and the little joys of life. He can negotiate his way through all the usual social settings, such as a coffee shop, supermarket, birthday party all just fine. He gives the appearance of being nothing more than what he seems.

2. A MAN EATEN UP

And by those who don't have faith or who believe without any depth, he is treated just like a piece of bread. Some notice and see him, quietly reassured by his presence. Others fear him more than the grim reaper. There are those who will nibble at him just to get a taste; they will ask him questions, sometimes very impertinent ones, to satisfy their curiosity, then simply leave. To some of the faithful he is nourishing bread for when it matters. Some will come to him to receive some word of instruction, consolation, or enlightenment, then once satisfied will store him again in the bread bin until next time hunger strikes.

As much as these things strike at a priest's sense of self-importance, they should come as no surprise, since this is exactly what Christ, the Bread of Heaven, **The Community of Saint Joseph is a community funded initiative, 100% reliant on the generosity and donations of the faithful.** If you would like to contribute to the ongoing support of this community, please donate into the following bank account. Thank you for your support and generosity. ACC NAME : Institute of the Good Shepherd Trust BSB: 083-543 ACC: 899651265

experienced during his earthly sojourn. When He healed the 10 lepers, 9 went off, too dazzled by their gift to remember the hand of the One who gave it to them (Luke 17:11-19). The Pharisees and Sadducees were constantly asking Him to work wonders in their sight (Mt 16:1-4, Mk 8:11-13). Moreover, even His own apostles had their moments when they didn't quite understand the Person they were following and tried to make Him fit their mental images of a Messiah, political leader, or state criminal tragically executed for political crimes. A priest can take consolation in Our Lord's experiences, remembering that not even His closest ones always understood or experienced Him properly. A French saying about the priest is that he is "a man eaten up", and here in these circumstances, he certainly feels himself eaten up like bread.

3. ASSOCIATION WITH THE HOLY EUCHARIST

For Christ, during His earthly ministry, was constantly trying to deepen and purify the minds of His apostles, and this is a priest's job, too. Christ welcomed His first followers as they were, taking them with the little sincere faith they had, overlooking their flaws and lack of polish and courtesy, gradually to reveal to them the true depths of His Heart. What is the Holy Eucharist, but Christ continuing this mission with our souls?

There is an enormous difference between what the heart of a non-believer and the heart of a devout Catholic experiences when he enters a church. The non-believer sees a sacred space, perhaps peaceful and culturally significant. The devout soul recognizes the palace of a King and genuflects piously before that King in the tabernacle when he enters the church. The difference is interior. The Holy Eucharist contains Christ's heart continually unfolding and expanding itself towards poor sinners, but the experience of each person in relation to it is different.

Some grieve Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist through indifference or blasphemy. While others, who have some semblance of faith approach the Blessed Sacrament with underdeveloped reverence. They know they must not approach with mortal sin on their souls, of course. But they approach with an almost superficial faith in the Eucharist. They know it is Jesus, but all they seek is the consolation they can receive, the nourishment they want. And while this is a good start, it really isn't far enough. For when a person with a very ardent faith approaches the Blessed Sacrament there is a deep and childlike reverence, a holy fear of one's unworthiness to be in the presence of the Blessed sacrament, a child-like confidence in being fed. And even on days when he cannot receive, he simply wants to be with the Eucharist, to keep Him company, to console and love Him.

How much these levels of faith influence how the faithful approach a priest, and how much a priest can tell about the faith of his faithful by the way they approach him. The priest is not Jesus Christ himself, but he is an *alter Christus*, another Jesus Christ to those who are around him. Those who deal with him, deal with another Jesus Christ, and can approach him as such. It's been my experience at times when I have spent an extended time with small circles of people, who at the beginning of our conversation have begun with an almost casual regard for me, then after some hours together and a deepening of our conversation, leave with a kind of reverence and a deeper faith, for they have entered into and seen the heart of a priest, the heart of another Christ. The faithful find Christ in a priest.

A priest's task is the same as the Holy Eucharist: through each encounter to increase the faith of the recipient. And just as in the Holy Eucharist, we receive in proportion to our faith, so we receive from a priest only as much as we open our heart.

Fr Shawn Murphy IBP

THIS WEEK

Mon 22 nd	Saint Paulinus, bishop and confessor. 3 rd class.
Tue 23 rd	Vigil of Saint John the Baptist. 2 nd class.
Wed 24 th	Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, 1st class. Mass @6pm
Thu 25 th	Saint William, abbot. 3 rd class.
Fri 26 th	Saints John and Paul, martyrs. 3 rd class.
Sat 27 th	Our Lady on Saturday. 4 th class.
Sun 28 th	5 th Sunday after Pentecost. 2 nd class.

WEEKLY TIMETABLE

DAY	MASS	CONFESSIONS	DEVOTIONS
Mon - Thu	8am Low Mass	7:15am - 7:45am	Holy Hour 5 - 6pm (Thu)
Fri	6pm Low Mass	5:30pm - 5:45 pm	Via Crucis 5pm
Sat	9am Low Mass	8:15pm - 8:45am	
Sun	10am High Mass	9:15am - 9:45am	Rosary 9:30am

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