

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time B Homily

The people of Israel were nourished by eating the manna, perennially recalled in the nourishment provided for them by their total receptivity to and absorption of the Law of Moses. Now the people of Israel are told of the absolute need to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man.

The shift from the more respectable verb “to eat” (phagein) to another verb that indicates the physical crunching with the teeth (trogein) accentuates that Jesus refers to a real experience of eating. Hints of the Eucharist continue to insinuate themselves into the words of Jesus. Flesh is to be broken and blood is to be spilled. Jesus now associates the separation of flesh and blood in a violent death as the moment of total giving of himself. Jesus, the Son of Man, will give of his whole self for the life of the world by means of a violent encounter between himself and his enemies in which his body will be broken and his blood will be poured out. This is the enduring gift that the Son of Man, Jesus, will give, the food that will not perish but will forever satisfy all hunger and thirst.