

# Connecting With the Sunday Readings

## Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Every year the Church invites us to think in a special way about the importance of the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Being present is similar to family closeness. Being present to each other means more than just physical presence. It also includes being in each other's minds and heart. And that's what Jesus desires with all of us.

Not only is Jesus truly present in the Eucharist, but he is there to be food for our life's journey. His real presence and love strengthens us. So when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, he comes to us to give us strength for our journey to God. He gives us hope during difficult times and most of all, he comes to us because he wants to be close to us.

### A Gospel Word for the Home

#### John 6:51-58

The Gospel reading this week speaks of hunger. People that Jesus lived with, and many people around the world know that food availability cannot be taken for granted. Up until recent times, most of the world was directly concerned with having enough food to survive. People regularly died of hunger. Most of us are more concerned about other food issues, like not eating too much, or eating the right kinds of food. So when Jesus speaks about being the "bread of life," it doesn't speak to us in the same way as it did to his contemporaries.

Still we need nourishment for our life all the time at the deepest level. Jesus is our nourishment as he brings us into close contact with him and therefore with God. He is the bread of life! Not so much life for the body, but life for our souls. The nourishment that he offers us will carry us beyond death into eternal life with God.

Think about the importance of family meals, a practice which some social historians say is diminishing in our time. When we gather as a family around the table, our bodies are nourished by good food, but so too are our souls by sharing food and conversation with each other. This is a sacred act. That's why Jesus judged it best to remember and encounter him and the love he has for us around a meal, a sacred meal, that we call the Eucharist.

## Parent Survival

Meals, all meals, can be sacred moments. In the Gospel according to Luke, the author used ten meals Jesus shared with others to describe Jesus' life. More is served at communal meals than food. In fact, it can be said that around meals with family, friends, and even strangers, there's more going on than meets the eye, or the mouth. Love and communion is also shared.

As a survival suggestion, bring your whole self to the meals you share with your family. Jesus clearly valued the importance of sharing food. Something happens during those times that connects us with God. It happens at Eucharist, but perhaps on other occasions when we break bread together.

*by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute*

## Car or Meal Talk

Examine the practice of the family meal. How can we as a family make these times more frequent, and better for all of us? How can we fight the trend to end such gatherings? Join the family meal revolution!

## One-Line Prayer

Dear Jesus: You have asked us to know you in the breaking of bread. Help us to value this not only at Eucharist, but at every meal we share with each other. Amen.