



Aug. 12, 2018 Jn. 6: 41-51 & 1 Kgs. 19:4-8

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other [Beck](#)

Stone, Naomi. [thou preparest a table before us](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Eucharist as new manna](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

[YouTube link](#)

ENTERING THE SCENE:

John Pilch reminds us: "American cultural heroes invariably include the person of humble origins who rises to achieve great status. Abraham Lincoln is but one familiar example. That such achievement is possible is a corollary of the American cultural belief in the equality of all persons. When real experience belies this belief, Americans fall back on the idea of equal opportunity. At least, everyone can rise to a greater position than the one that came with birth. Such a notion is entirely lacking in the ancient Mediterranean world. Basic honor derives from birth into very specific circumstances. Honor requires that a person remain in this status, maintain and preserve it, and never consider "getting ahead?" Any attempt to improve upon or behave not in keeping with one's birth status is shameful because it is a divisive force in community." Is it no wonder that the people stumbled over this?

John 6:41-51

41 At this the Jews began to **grumble** about him because he said, "I am the **bread** that came down from **heaven**." 42 They said, "**Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph**, whose **father** and **mother** we **know**? How can he now say, 'I came down from **heaven**'?" 43 Stop **grumbling** among yourselves," Jesus answered. 44 No one can **come to me** unless the **Father** who sent me **draws him**, and I will **raise him up** at the last day. 45 It is written in the **Prophets**: 'They will **all be taught by God**.' Everyone who listens to the **Father** and learns from him **comes to me**. 46 No one has seen the **Father** except the one who **is from God**; only he has seen the **Father**. 47 I tell you the **truth**, he who believes has **everlasting life**. 48 I am the **bread of life**. 49 Your **forefathers** ate the **manna** in the desert, yet they **died**. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from **heaven**, which a man may eat and not **die**. 51 I am the **living bread** that came down from **heaven**. If anyone eats of this **bread**, he will **live forever**. This **bread** is my **flesh**, which I will give for the **life of the world**."

DISCUSSION QUESTION: The people grumbled because they were affronted by Jesus. When was the last time I did that?

PRAYER: Teacher Jesus, I often grumble when someone challenges me or confronts me with a truth I am not ready or able to hear. Otherwise I just discount it at nonsense and walk away. When you offer me nourishment for the journey ahead I need help to get up and get moving. More often than not I just fall asleep on the couch with a full stomach. If I really want that elusive thing called "eternal life" I must be willing to risk and move into the unknown. Help! Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:



BREAD OF LIFE / LIVING BREAD / MANNA: In the Hebrew Scriptures (O.T.) bread was often a symbol for God's revealed truth. The bread the people knew of only sustained life, Jesus' bread gives life and sustains it as well.

When you receive communion, do you have the sense it as source and sustainer of your life?

GRUMBLE / GRUMBLING: The people were eager to know of heaven, but not enthusiastic about how to enter it, if it meant following Jesus' challenging teachings. Other translations use the word "murmur" which evokes Ex. 16:2, 7, 8. Even though 95% of the people were illiterate, they knew their scriptures by heart and now strongly disagree with Jesus' interpretation.

Remember the last time you grumbled. What caused that response? Were you, like those listening to Jesus in this text, reacting to something you didn't want to hear?

IS THIS NOT JESUS / SON OF JOSEPH & MARY: In John's gospel, Jesus was known as the son of Joseph. (See 1:45 & 6:42) This implies a disrespectful tone. (See below)

When the people wanted to situate the source of their discontent, they immediately resorted to the 'common sense' of Jesus' origins. How does reverting to 'what everybody knows' help you to avoid a new idea?

KNOW / WILL BE TAUGHT BY GOD / TRUTH: God alone engenders faith; we can only model it for others. Whose modeling of faith has God used to engender your faith?

COMES TO ME / DRAWS HIM: The truth of Jesus' teaching about God is not something to be simply contemplated or theorized about, but to be done and practiced in our daily lives. We find here the beginning of what will be known as the Trinity, as the Father draws the son. You are drawn to Jesus in the gospels. How do you move it from the head to the heart? How is the Trinity involved in the movement?

HEAVEN / FATHER: When speaking about the transcendent/imminent Other who dwells beyond space and time, the scriptures use the words heaven and father. How do you integrate the new awareness brought about by the 21st century into these words of heaven and Father?



RAISE HIM UP / EVERLASTING LIFE / LIVE FOREVER / LIFE OF THE WORLD:

Jesus will out-suffer violence and sin. He will lose nothing.

How does the promise of the Resurrection raise you up to new understandings of life beyond space and time? When you last attended a funeral, did you find comfort and hope in this promise?

PROPHETS / FOREFATHERS / IS FROM GOD: God is always urging us into the risky network of life. This is always the message of those who came before us, that there is always more.

How are you cooperating with God in the risky networks of your life? How does the promise of always more impact your daily choices?

DIED / DIE: In John 6: 39, 44, and 54, we find that death is never final.

Have you ever read a book written by those studying life after life? If so, what prompted you to do that? Was it helpful? If so, why?

FLESH: There was a current saying that to "eat someone's flesh" meant to slander them or to engage in backbiting. When Jesus included his flesh as food, people instantly recoiled from such an unthinkable idea, and many left off following him. This saying supported accusations that Christians were cannibalistic.

How do you make sense of this saying? Would you explain communion this way today? If so, how would you do it?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Jn. 6:42 // Mt. 13:54-7; Mk. 6:1-4; Jn. 6: 45 // Is. 54:13; Jn. 6: 46 // Jn. 7:29; Ex. 33:20; Jn. 6:51 // Mt. 26:26f; Lk. 22:19;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: 1 Kings 19: 4-8; Ps. 34: 2-9; Eph. 4:30- 5:2; Jn. 6:41-51; Revised Common Lectionary: 2 Sam. 18:5-9, 15, 31-33; Ps. 130; Eph. 4:25-5: 2; Jn. 6: 35, 41-51;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

We can only teach what we know for ourselves. Eckhart Tolle

People will recognize us as speaking with authority only when they sense that, like Jesus, we are under divine authority ourselves, that our message is not our own, that our actual lives stand behind the message, that our words are meant to reveal God and not ourselves, that we love others enough to give up protecting ourselves, that our real concern is God's kingdom and not how we impress others, that we consider the community bigger than ourselves, and that we are willing to sweat blood rather than get bitter or walk away.

[Fr. Ron Rolheiser](#)

Mostly we think of people with great authority as higher up, far away, hard to reach. But spiritual authority comes from compassion and emerges from deep inner solidarity with those who are "subject" to authority. The one who is fully like us, who deeply understands our joys and pains or hopes and desires, and who is willing and able to walk with us, that is the one to whom we gladly give authority and whose "subjects" we are willing to be. It is the compassionate authority that empowers, encourages, calls forth hidden gifts, and enables great things to happen. True spiritual authorities are located in the point of an upside-down triangle, supporting and holding into the light everyone they offer their leadership to. Henri Nouwen

"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge." - Albert Einstein

Am I somewhat repelled by the proposed teacher? Move on. That small voice inside called intuition, hunch, or conscience is more reliable than any other and needs to be respected. Never follow what your inner voice opposes- new knowledge comes only through

consent, and when I hear what is true, an agreement reverberates inside me.. It's as though I always knew...and only just now remembered. Pg.10. Lillian firestone. How to Find a Spiritual Teacher. Fall. Parabola

Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time, and always start with the person nearest you.-Mother Teresa

“Body” and “blood” have an entirely different meaning for the Hebrew than for the Greek or for our peculiar cultural version of the Greek image. For the Hebrew, “bread” and “wine” are symbols, not substances. The word “body” for the Hebrew means “person-present.” It is the word for the whole real living, existential present person. For the Greek, the word connotes the physical, material element in the human composite of body and soul. For the Hebrew, “blood” likewise is whole person with particular emphasis on life. “Giving” one’s blood in Hebrew means literally giving one’s life – and it is not even what we would call a figure of speech.

Parr, Raymond. Process Person Presence. Chicago. Thomas More Press. 1990. Page 176.

Jesus says, “If you eat this bread you will live forever” (**John 6:51**). It is so interesting that he chooses taste, flavor, and nutrition as the symbol of how life is transferred, and not intellectual cognition. If you live by the momentary identity that others give you, that’s what dies when you die, and you’re left with nothing. Your relative identity passes away, but it is like the painful erasing of an unwanted tattoo. When Jesus says he’s giving himself to you as the “bread of life,” he’s saying, as it were, “Find yourself in me, and this will not pass or change or die. Eat this food as your primary nutrition, and you are indestructible.” This is your absolute and indestructible identity. Richard Rohr

Authority is known because new life is being “authored,” not because titles are being claimed. P 81.

Shea, John. The Spirit Master. Chicago, Thomas More Press. 1987.

Jesus is given to the world. He was chosen, blessed, and broken to be given. Jesus' life and death were a life and death for others. The Beloved Son of God, chosen from all eternity, was broken on the cross so that this one life could multiply and become food for people of all places and all times. As God's beloved children we have to believe that our little lives, when lived as God's chosen and blessed children, are broken to be given to others. We too have to become bread for the world. When we live our brokenness under the blessing, our lives will continue to bear fruit from generation to generation. That is the story of the saints - they died, but they continue to be alive in the hearts of those who live after them - and it can be our story too. Henri Nouwen

Few of the New Testament’s many affirmations may more reliably be attributed to Jesus’ own awareness and self-interpretation that this – that the earthly mission on which he is engaged, and of which suffering and death are the inescapable consequence, is the execution of a heavenly commission, actualized by a perfect alignment of will and goal between the sender and the sent. Prompted by the unprecedented intimacy and familiarity of Jesus’ own language, expressing and addressing as Father the God in heaven who had sent him, the church developed Jesus’ consciousness of sonship into a most exalted designation: Son of God.

Lewis, Alan E. Between Cross and Resurrection. Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans. 2001. Pg. 120.

When we ask why these transformations are taking place, it becomes strikingly clear that the transformation of the bread and wine into the body of Christ is not for its own sake but for the sake of the transformation of the assembly into the true and living body of Christ. The whole purpose of what is taking place is not simply that the Eucharistic body of Christ be made present on this or that altar. The purpose is for the assembly to become more fully transformed into the ecclesial body of Christ, or, as we have been arguing here, to be taken up more completely into the totally free, totally loving and totally self-communicating, mutual love of Father, Son and Holy spirit. Take this away, and Eucharistic presence becomes meaningless.

Daly, Robert J. Sacrifice: the Way to Enter the Paschal Mystery. America 5/12/03 Pgs 14ff.

Whenever we come together around the table, take bread, bless it, break it, and give it to one another saying: "The Body of Christ," we know that Jesus is among us. He is among us not as a vague memory of a person who lived long ago but as a real, life-giving presence that transforms us. By eating the Body of Christ, we become the living Christ and we are enabled to discover our own chosenness and blessedness, acknowledge our brokenness, and trust that all we live we live for others. Thus we, like Jesus himself, become food for the world. Henri Nouwen

The best way to thank a gift giver is to thoroughly enjoy the gift. Pg. 80 Rolheiser, Ronald. Against an Infinite Horizon. NY. Crossroad Pub. 2001

He said, "We must say to our white brothers and sisters all over the South who try to keep us down: 'We will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with spirit force. We will not hate you and yet we cannot in all good conscience obey your evil laws. Do to us what you will. Threaten our children and we will still love you. Bomb our homes. Go by our churches early in the morning and bomb them, if you please. And we will still love you. We will wear you down by our capacity to suffer and, winning the victory, we will not only win our freedom, we will so appeal to your hearts and your consciences that we will win you in the process.'" Dr. Martin Luther King

To journey without being changed is to be a nomad. To change without journeying is to be a chameleon. To journey and to be transformed by the journey is to be a pilgrim. Page 34 Nepo, Mark. The Book of Awakening. Berkeley, CA. Conari Press. 2000.

God's heart is the center where all paradoxes are held in tension. Wendy Wright

The quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning. Uncertainty is the very condition to impel man to unfold his powers. Erich Fromm

Now, in our image of humanity as a Holy Communion, Jesus also figures as the person who does actually love individual persons in this energy-activating way and who starts the chain reaction of persons loving one another. Because of his humanity, Jesus is familiar and tangible to us. Because of his escape from death, he is secure; his love can never fail, and he is able, across time, to be actually-not just imaginatively-present to us now. Because of his abundant free energy, he can liberate love in all who are willing to be loved by him. Pg. 13. Bruteau, Beatrice. *The Grand Option: Personal Transformation and a New Creation*. South Bend, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2001.

Live deep enough and there is only one direction. Page73. Nepo, Mark. The Book of Awakening. Berkeley, CA. Conari Press. 2000.

Life is like a deck chair Lucy and Charlie Brown are engaged in "heavy, deep, and real" conversation about the meaning of life. Lucy says that, "Life is like a deck chair. Some people place it so they can see where they are going. Some place it so they can see where they have been. And some place it so they can see where they are now." Charlie Brown thinks about Lucy's wisdom, then replies, "I can't even get mine unfolded."

If you receive this well, you are what you receive...for the loaf that contains Christ is made up of many individual kernels of grain, but these kernels must, to become the loaf containing Christ, first be round up and then baked together by fire.'
St Augustine (*Sermo 227, In Die Paschae IV*) 75-6

I am your food, but instead of my being changed into you, it is you who will be transformed into me. St. Augustine

Among the Osage Indians, there is a custom that when a child is born, before it is allowed to drink from its mother's breast, a holy person is summoned, someone "who has talked to the gods" is brought into the room This person recites to the newborn infant the story of the creation of the world and of terrestrial animals. Not until this has been done is the baby given the mother's breast. Later, when the child is old enough to drink water, the same holy person is summoned again. This time he or she tells the story of creation, ending with the story of the sacred origins of water. Only then, after hearing this story is the child given water. Then, when the child is old enough to take solid foods, "the person who talked to the gods" is brought in again and he or she, this time, tells the story of the origins of grains and other foods. The object of all this is to introduce the newborn child into the sacramental reality of the world. This child will grow up to know that eating is not just a physiological act, but a religious one as well. 206-7
Rolheiser, Ronald. Against an Infinite Horizon. NY. Crossroad Pub. 2001

The goal of mission and of service is not to improve the world and create utopia on earth; it is that the world may believe and know, know that God loves the world and has sent the Son to deliver it from perishing to everlasting and abundant life. p. 457
Lewis, Alan E. Between Cross and Resurrection. Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans. 2001.

A teacher ought to be a stranger to the desire for domination, vainglory, and pride. A teacher should not be fooled by flattery, nor be blinded by gifts, conquered by the stomach, nor dominated by anger. A teacher should be patient, gentle and humble as far as possible; successfully tested and without partisanship, full of concern, and a lover of souls. Amma Theodora

Jn. 6:41: Jews began to complain, Jesus' claim to be from heaven is offensive, given their knowledge of his parentage. 45: Prophets, Isa 54.13; cf. Jer 31.34. 51-58: In contrast to the Synoptic Gospels, John's Gospel does not provide an account of the memorial meal during the Last Supper. Jesus alludes to his death and resurrection, in that he became flesh (1.14) and offered himself to God, thus sacrificing his life for the life of the world. Pg. 171. [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#)

Remember that this next dimension is not the same things as the afterlife. It is not later but *lighter*, a more subtle quality of aliveness that aired works with us (otherwise we would not be alive at all) and has ever been the real causal ground from which we receive out life breath by breath. The only change in state imparted by physical death is that during the time we are outwardly clothed in human flesh it appears to be inside us; after the physical body has dropped away, we discover that all along we have been inside it! Pg. 188.
Bourgeault, Cynthia The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three. Shambhala Pub, In. Boulder, Co 2013

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2015. Pgs.113-116. To order contact Carol.Oberfoell@loras.edu

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2012. Pgs. 108-110.

Pilch, John J. The Cultural World of Jesus-Cycle B. Collegeville, MN. The Liturgical Press. 1996.