**20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B**

August 18/19, 2018

Proverbs 9: 1-6; Eph 5: 15-20; John 6: 51-58

“The Jews quarreled among themselves saying, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’”

Yes, we, like they, tend to quarrel among ourselves even as the Lord asks us all to become one with Him in his own flesh and blood, and one with each other as a family of one flesh and blood.

When we quarrel with God, or quarrel with each other, where does it lead us? Those who quarrel with God or their neighbors and bicker and create divisions end up sinning and are left with mere human ideas and perceptions. Divisions lead to narrow-mindedness, minds unable to see the deeper realities, the greater truths. Angry people have tunnel vision and are often blind and foolish.

Our first reading admonishes us to forsake the foolishness of quarrels and divisions and advance in understanding. Our responsorial psalm tells us to “taste and see the goodness of the Lord.” Jesus in the Gospel tells us that if we are to live, we must be one with him in the Eucharist by eating his Body and drinking his blood.

When Jesus told the people of his time to be united to him and each other and told them this is possible because he was the Bread of Life and they could have eternal life if they partook of his Body and Blood, many chose to walk away and quarrel among themselves and remain divided. For them, the Eucharist was a cause of division, not unity. In our world today, this unfortunately remains true too often. There are many divisions among us Christians, too many quarrels. There is too much blindness and foolishness.

Jesus said that whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood remains united to him and to all who worthily eat and drink. It is the Eucharist which will ultimately unite us. It is Jesus’ Real Presence in the Eucharist that even now binds us to God and to each other. It must not divide us.

We must believe this. We must see with the eyes of faith. It is really Jesus himself who calls us. He is really and substantially present in the Eucharist – his Body and his Blood, his soul and his divinity under the appearance of bread and wine.

Reconcile yourselves with me, Jesus says. Reconcile yourselves with each other, he insists. As me for forgiveness and reconciliation and they will be yours. Ask for forgiveness from your brother and sister for any divisions you may have created. Then, come to the Eucharist and receive me.

All of this speaks to the reality of the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. It speaks of the unity which must be ours if we worthily eat and drink his Body and Blood. It speaks of the need for reconciliation with him and with each other if we approach the altar for Holy Communion. No divisions, no quarrels, no serious sins should exist.

There is great peace and consolation offered to us. A person of peace sees clearly and deeply. “Be still and know that I am God,” says the Lord. “I am really and truly present in the Eucharist,” he says. “Look with the eyes of faith. See beyond what appears as bread and wine and know that it is me. Feed on me.”

Yes, a person of peace, a person reconciled with God and with neighbor, is able to see clearly and understand. He or she is not clouded by sin. A person in conflict and divided from God and others cannot.

Let no divisions exist among us. Let us not quarrel with God or with each other about the Body and Blood of the Lord. Let us not divide the Body of Christ. We must not divide Jesus. We must not separate ourselves from him by our sins.

Let each of us seek forgiveness for our sins, reconciliation with others, and then come and receive our Lord Jesus, really and truly present, in the Eucharist.