

# 19<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## St. John 6:41-51

Bolsena is a town in Italy and in the year A.D. 1263, a Priest, whilst celebrating the Mass, had doubts as to whether the bread and wine truly became the Body and Blood of Christ. At that moment the host he held in his hands began to bleed onto the altar. Today the cloth on which the blood was caught is still kept and on it can be seen the face of Christ. A year later the Pope decreed that the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, *Corpus Christi*, was to be celebrated throughout the world and it remains today a public holiday in much of Europe and the Caribbean.

There have been many other miracles of the Eucharist seen around the world. In A.D. 700 in the Italian town of Lanciano, a Priest praying the Mass found the host in his hands change to flesh and the wine in the chalice become drops of blood. The flesh and the blood have remained intact for centuries and for centuries scientific tests have been conducted. In A.D. 1973 the World Health Organisation of the United Nations conducted its own tests and in its final report it said that the host is real flesh, such as that found in the human heart, and that the blood is real human blood, identifying it as type AB. For anyone who claims that the host and the wine were substituted for flesh and blood taken from a human being they have only to look at the fact that this flesh and blood have not deteriorated in over 1,400 years.

There are stories, verified by doctors, of men and women who lived on nothing else but the Body and Blood of Christ which they received daily in Holy Communion. There is Alexandrina Marina in Portugal who for thirteen years, from A.D. 1942 to A.D. 1955 ate and drank nothing except the Body and Blood of Christ, but lost no weight nor suffered any signs of malnutrition. There is Marthe Robin of France who for thirty years up until her death in A.D. 1981

took no food or drink except for Holy Communion.

Eucharistic miracles have been recorded and verified around the world for centuries; from the seventh-century to the twenty-first century, from Austria, Belgium, Martinique, Columbia, Croatia, Egypt, France, Germany, India, La Réunion, Italy, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland.

Pope Benedict XVI repeatedly said that God's love is the solution to every problem, personal and social, as well as the answer to the yearning of every human heart, and that the Eucharist is the ultimate manifestation of that love. It is the Holy Eucharist in which Jesus Christ makes Himself a gift to us, revealing God's infinite love for every man and woman. In the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, Christ meets us, who are made in the image and likeness of God, and joins Himself to us. In the sacrifice of the Mass, which makes present the Last Supper and the sacrifice of the Holy Cross, Our Lord, under the appearances of bread and wine gives His Body and Blood. This is not just a theory, this is not just some story, this is reality. The bread and wine are not something like the Body and Blood of Christ, they are not representative of His Body and Blood, they are not symbols of His Body and Blood. The fact is that after the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of consecration of the Priest, the bread and wine no longer exist at all. There is no bread and there is no wine at all. In spite of appearances, in spite of taste and smell and touch, the bread and wine are gone. Where they once were there is now and only the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ.

So we who have faith must approach the holy altar of almighty God with fear and trembling so that in our humility and in our yearning for that divine love and mercy we may make known the first coming of Our Lord and live our lives awaiting His coming again.

And we prepare ourselves to receive Our Lord by fasting for at least one hour before Mass and making our confession regularly so that we receive Him in a state of grace and so that, in our sinfulness, we do not kiss Him as did Judas

Isca-riot but instead confess Him as did the Good Thief who was crucified by His side. And we do this because on the altar and on our tongues is God Himself.