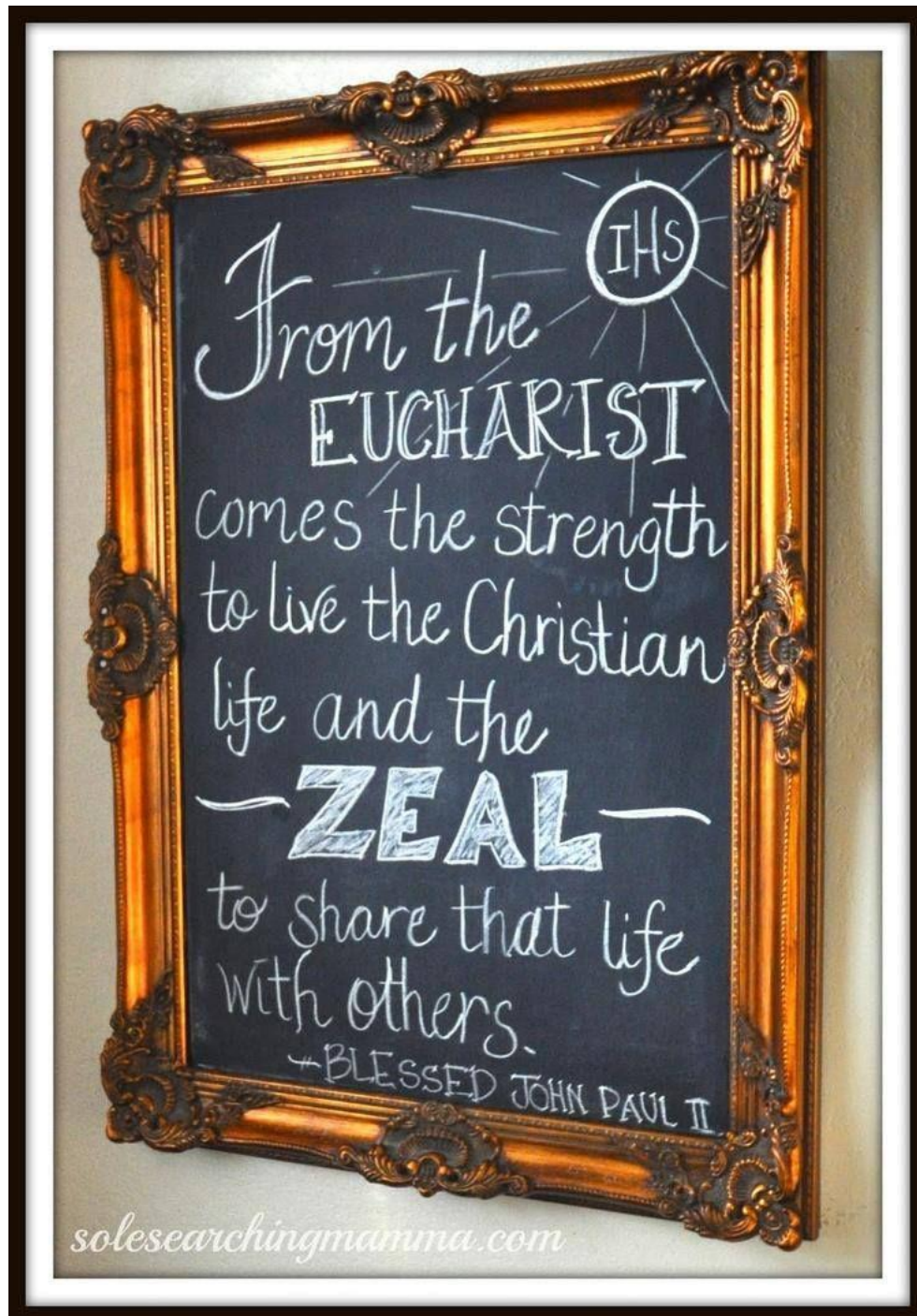


FROM FATHER JOHN: *"The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad. Clouds and darkness are round about him, justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne. The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the LORD of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his justice, and all peoples see his glory. Because you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth, exalted far above all gods." ~ Psalm 97*

The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth!!!



Our gospel reading from last Sunday, from today's mass and from the mass two weeks from today all come from *The Bread of Life Discourse* (John 6:22 – 59). This passage of sacred scripture is one of the most influential scripture passages in the entire history of Christianity. The teachings of the Church concerning the gift of the Eucharist stem from this passage in John's gospel along with other passages like the last supper and the Eucharistic breaking of the bread in the 11th chapter of the First Letter to the Corinthians.

Today's gospel (verses 6:41 – 51) is right in the middle of our Lord's discourse on the *Bread of Life*.

*“The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, ‘**I am the bread that came down from heaven,**’ and they said, ‘Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”*

Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.

*Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. **I am the bread of life.** Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. **I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.**”*
(emphasis mine)

When he says **I AM the bread of life** our Lord is telling us that He is the Eucharist, that He will feed us with His Body and Blood, that He is really and truly Present in the Eucharist, Body and Soul, Humanity and Divinity.



Tertullian wrote that "The flesh feeds on the Body and Blood of Christ that the soul may likewise be filled with God." St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote that "Just as by melting two candles together you get one piece of wax, so, I think, one who receives the flesh and blood of Jesus is fused together with him, and the soul finds that he is in Christ and Christ in him." St. Basil the Great wrote that "To partake of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ is good and beneficial; for he says quite plainly: 'He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.' Who can doubt that to share continually in life is the same thing as having life abundantly."

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that it is in the nature of human beings to be led by corporeal things and things that are perceptible to the senses to the things that are spiritual and intelligible; that Divine Providence provides for everything in accordance with its nature. Therefore, it is fitting that God should provide a means of salvation for humankind in the form of certain corporeal and sensible signs which we call sacraments.

The sacraments are not mere signs; they do not merely signify Divine grace, but in virtue of their Divine institution, they cause that grace in the souls of men and women. "*Signum sacro sanctum efficax gratiae*" -- a sacrosanct sign producing grace, is a good, succinct definition of a sacrament of the New Law.

When we celebrate the mass we go to Holy Communion together, as the One People of God. We don't go to Holy Communion separately and alone even if we are separated physically. It is a Communion of each of us with our Lord and Savior and it is a Communion of each of us with one another. We truly become connected in the Body of Christ and united in a deeply spiritual way when we receive the sacraments.

We are never truly alone, we are never truly separated, we are never truly isolated. When we receive His Body and Blood, we realize that God is always with us and that God is always in Communion with us. It's why we come together to celebrate mass rather than just praying at home alone.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

