

Body & Blood of Christ - A 2020

Full Devotion

Several years ago a couple of reporters conducted an experiment on the streets of Miami, Florida. They printed up a copy of the Bill of Rights in the form of a petition, put it on a clipboard, and then stopped people on the sidewalk and asked them to sign it. As you know, the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution are the Bill of Rights, and they were adopted and put into effect in December of 1791. The reporters were surprised at people's reaction when asked to add their names to the so-called petition.

Most people glanced at the document, shook their heads, and walked on by without signing. Several people became angry with the reporters and accused them of being radical enemies of the American way of life. In fact, the experiment ended when the reporters found themselves surrounded by a dozen or so passers-by who were shaking their fists at them and calling them subversive Communists who ought to be thrown in jail.

What the experiment demonstrated is what we already know. Many citizens of the United States pay lip service to their country and its heritage. They claim to be loyal and patriotic in every way. They say they are proud to belong to a country as great as ours. And yet at the same time they haven't the vaguest notion what the United States Constitution actually says, and they consider the Bill of Rights to be a radical, anti-American document. In other words, these people claim citizenship, but they have not internalized the basic meaning of being a citizen. They claim the privilege, but they will not eat and drink the ethos of United States of America.

The same sort of thing is described in today's Gospel. Jesus says, I am the living bread that came down from heaven. . . Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Most people probably think Jesus is talking about communion. He isn't. He's talking about the difference between external lip service and internal embodiment. He's talking about the difference between admiring him and actually taking up one's cross and following him. He's talking about the difference between acting like a Christian on the outside and being a Christian on the inside. (by Edwin D. Peterman)

Bread from Home

I'm reminded of a true story of a soldier who was severely wounded. When he was out of surgery, the doctors said that there was a good chance for recovery, except that the soldier wouldn't eat anything. The nurses and nuns tried everything, but he refused all food-drinking only water and juice. One of his buddies knew why the soldier wouldn't eat-he was homesick. So, his friend, since the hospital wasn't too far from the soldier's home, offered to bring the young man's father to visit him. The commanding officer approved and the friend went to the parents' home. As the father was about to leave for the hospital, the mother wrapped up a loaf of fresh bread for her son.

Well, the patient was very happy to see his father but he still wouldn't eat-that is, until the father said; "Son, this bread was made by your mother, especially for you". The boy brightened and began to eat.

I think that you can guess where I'm going with that story. You and I are that boy. We are the ones who have been wounded in the battle of life. We are the ones who've been wounded by sin, by trials and pains, by loss and by our forgetfulness of God.

We lose our taste for the food that will strengthen our souls. Holy Communion gives us life, spiritual life, God's life. It gives us spiritual healing and spiritual strength. There was nothing 'magic' about the mother's bread unless, that is, one feels that 'love' is magic--which, of course, it is.

Christ in Me and I in Him

There is an story about minister walking along the ocean with his small son. The boy questioned his father about Sunday's sermon. The boy said, "Dad, I cannot understand how Christ can live in us and we live in him at the same time." Further down the beach, the father noticed an empty bottle with a cork in it. Taking the bottle, he half filled it with water, re-corked it and flung it out into the ocean. As they watched the bottle bob up and down he said, "Son, the sea is in the bottle and the bottle is in the sea. It is a picture of life in Christ. You live under the Lordship of Christ and He lives in you."