

A reflection related to the Sunday Gospel



### The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

**TODAY**

**Proverbs 9:1–6**  
**Ephesians 5:15–20**  
**John 6:51–58**

**MONDAY**

**Matthew 19:16–22**  
*"There is only one who is good."*

**TUESDAY**

**Matthew 19:23–30**  
*"... it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven."*

**WEDNESDAY**

**Matthew 20:1–16**  
*"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."*

**THURSDAY**

**Matthew 22:1–14**  
*"For many are called, but few are chosen."*

**FRIDAY**

**Matthew 22:34–40**  
*"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

**SATURDAY**

**Matthew 23:1–12**  
*"The greatest among you will be your servant."*

### The Responsibility of Receiving

Tommy was eight years old and blind from birth. When he entered the hospital for an experimental procedure which could restore his sight, the only thing that Tommy insisted on bringing with him was his teddy bear, which had always been his security. The bear remained tucked under his arm through every test and medical procedure.

When the bandages were removed from his eyes, Tommy was able, for the first time, to see light, color, his mother's face, and the bear that he had clutched for so many years. After weeks of post-operative examinations, the doctor came in for a last visit.

Tommy spoke up first. "Doctor," he said, "I want to pay you for helping me." He extended his teddy bear to the physician. The doctor froze, knowing that accepting this remarkable gift would change him. But he rallied himself and graciously received what was offered. He decided to display the bear in his office with a

small sign: "This is the highest fee I ever received in exchange for professional services."

Receiving something of great value changes us. It binds us to the giver. It makes us responsible. In today's Gospel Jesus offers us the living bread which has come down from Heaven. If we accept that gift, we should understand how it will affect us.

If the gift of a teddy bear touches our hearts, how much more should the gift of the Bread of Life change our lives? When we receive this gift, it makes us responsible to build God's kingdom, to see that God's will is done on earth.

### The Faith of the Church

Because the Eucharist unites us to Christ, it also unites us to the Body of Christ which is the Church. Because Christ our Savior exemplified God's love of and commitment to the poor in a special way, we who share in the Eucharist must commit ourselves to serve those who are most in need. We must be willing to recognize Christ in the poorest of our brothers and sisters (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1396–97).



### Questions of the Week

The objection of the people in today's Gospel—"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52)—reminds us that the teaching of Jesus is not always easy. Becoming a disciple requires a change in our thinking and lifestyle.

**Adults**

*What part of Jesus' teaching is difficult for me to accept?*

**Children**

*Do I understand that following Jesus is sometimes difficult?*

Visit us at [www.FaithFirst.com](http://www.FaithFirst.com) (click on "Faith First for Families," click on "Gospel Reflections") and share today's Gospel reading as a family.



Sunday and Daily Reading references for the entire week



Reflection questions for children and adults on the Gospel reading



A reference to a Church teaching related to the Sunday Gospel



## Responding to God's Word. . .

Christians associate the living bread of today's Gospel with the Eucharist. Each time we receive the Eucharist, we assume the responsibility which comes with such a gift. That responsibility can be discerned in the sacramental signs of the Eucharist: the bread and wine.

Every time we receive the consecrated bread, we affirm a connection to the farmers who grew the wheat and harvested it and to those who took the flour and baked it. Every time we drink the consecrated wine, we display our connection to the workers who harvested the grapes and to those who produced the wine.

The Eucharist, Christ's very self, connects us to the rest of humanity and impels us to see all human connections in light of the Gospel. Every time we

receive the Eucharist we are impelled to ask, "Are those people to whom we are connected receiving a just wage? Do they have health care? Can they provide education for their children? Are they able to live life freely and to pursue happiness?"

We cannot receive the Eucharist and at the same time distance ourselves from those who make the bread. In receiving we become responsible to the giver of this immeasurable gift. When we receive the Eucharist, we become connected to the problems of this earth and to God's determination to resolve them. When we receive the Bread of Life, we become responsible to build God's kingdom, committed to act for love and justice in our world.

## SUGGESTIONS

**In the home.** At a time when the family is together, ask each member to identify a way in which they are responsible for each other.

**In the workplace or in school.** Find a way to be gracious when someone offers a gift or an act of kindness to you.

**In the community.** Reflect upon someone in your church or neighborhood who has been a blessing to you. Thank him or her for the gift you have received.

A reflection on the Sunday reading that invites a response



## Meditation Moment

The movie E.T. contains two scenes that deal with food. In one scene the young hero of the film leaves some candy for E.T. to show him he wants to be his friend. The other scene shows a starved E.T. raiding a refrigerator. Behind the warmth and humor of the scenes is a basic message. It is this: without food, we die—whether we are human or extraterrestrial. What is true of bodily life is also true of spiritual life.

### For reflection . . .

*The two episodes in E.T. and Jesus' words invite me to ask, How appreciative am I of the Eucharist as my spiritual food?*

BEFORE COMMUNION THE SACRED BREAD DOES NOT LOOK AS IF CHRIST IS PRESENT IN IT. AFTER COMMUNION WE CHRISTIANS DO NOT ALWAYS LOOK AS IF CHRIST IS PRESENT IN US.

FRANK SHEED (ADAPTED)  
ADAPTED FROM MISSION BY MARK LINK, SJ

A meditation from Fr. Mark Link on the Sunday Gospel

## Seeing Christ's Body

Lord Jesus,  
I frequently reflect  
on the gift you offer me  
in the Eucharist.  
I stand before the mystery of  
your Body and Blood  
given to me. As I share in this  
profound gift, never allow me  
to forget that you do not only sit  
at the right hand of the Father,  
but also live in your Church.  
Permit me to see that  
I cannot receive your life  
in the Eucharist and  
ignore the needs of my  
brothers and sisters who  
are your Body on earth.  
Amen.

Carry this thought in your heart  
as a guide for your faith journey  
this week.

. . . You dishonor this table  
when you do not share your  
food with someone who  
shares in this meal.

John Chrysostom,  
Homilies on 1 Corinthians

A saint in the Catholic heritage whose feast day is approaching

## Profile in Faith

Saint John Chrysostom  
(c. 347–407).

John Chrysostom was an important Father of the early Church and became the archbishop of Constantinople in 398. He was known for his eloquence and his fearless attacks against the abuses of leadership both in the Church and in civil government. In his many homilies and treatises which have come down to us, he creatively proclaims the Gospel, highlighting the wonder of faith and the responsibility to care for the poor. Because of his gift for speaking, he was given the surname "Chrysostom" which comes from the Greek word meaning "golden mouthed." His feast day is September 13.

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A prayer and a quotation to guide you through the week

