

**So last Monday when I chose this scripture reading,
I was sure it was talking about Eucharist...communion...
I read the Scripture and it sure sounded like what I had
been taught as a child regarding Communion!**

**Then I did my Biblical research and found out this text
has nothing to do with Communion!**

Interestingly the church reading leaves out the next line:

“He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.”

**Scholars apparently think that Jesus is doing what Jewish men
did in those days in the synagogue...**

**They would re-interpret a few verses from their Hebrew Scriptures
making it usable for their daily lives.**

**Jesus wasn't talking about his Last Supper,
or our about our tradition of Communion...**

**Did you know that early Christians who talked about eating the flesh of the Son of Man
and drink his blood, as our text states, were accused of cannibalism?**

Could you blame their accusers when they heard such language?

**If I didn't know that Jesus was teaching metaphorically and symbolically,
I would have headed in the opposite direction...super fast!**

Scholars believe that Jesus was teaching about some text in Exodus.

**As you probably remember, once the pharaoh let the Jewish people go,
they spent, according to the writer, 40 years wandering in the desert
before they reached their promised land.**

**Very shortly after they had left Egypt,
lots of the people began to complain,**

because the desert was hot and dangerous and desolate,
because they brought no water or food with them...
Soon, they began to doubt the wisdom of leaving Egypt...
for even though they were slaves,
at least they knew where their next meal was coming from.

It was God who provided both water and manna for them.
But, as the story goes, Yahweh provided for them in such a way
that they could only gather what they needed for THAT day and no more,
otherwise it would rot...

The Jews were being fed both spiritually and physically...
Their bodies were sustained by the food from heaven,
and their faith, their trust in Yahweh, was tested and nurtured
when they followed what the Lord commanded.

The Exodus... what they call their release from slavery
and their journey through the desert,
is the most pivotal, important event in Jewish history...it still is today!

So now, thirteen hundred years later,
Jesus steps up to the platform to teach in the synagogue
and he says, in effect:
so your ancestors ate the bread from heaven, the manna
and they are long gone....

But if you eat my flesh, for I AM the living bread from heaven....
you will not die.

Those ancient people who heard Jesus that day,
would have clearly known the connection he was making.
Besides all the connections to the Exodus, Jesus used the "I Am" statement...

which would have reminded them of Moses' encounter with the burning bush...

The Jews hearing Jesus that day

would certainly have to admit that their ancestors who ate the manna of the desert were long dead...it did not give them life eternal on this earth...

But now, this teacher comes in and promises them that they will live forever.

Did they take that literally?

Some of the Jews obviously did because they say:

“How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

But we know that we cannot take him literally,

because all the Jews who followed Jesus, who dined with him...

all those who have taken part of Eucharist or Communion,

or the Lord's supper are long since dead and buried...

Some traditions think of it as a memorial meal, some believe that Christ is 'really' present (I used to be told that I can not chew the host: cuz I was breaking Jesus' bones!)

So, what does it mean, metaphorically, to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ?

As I see it, to eat the bread and drink the blood of Christ is a metaphor for having intimate relationship with Christ.

The metaphor is contained in the very real reality of how our human bodies need and process food....

When we eat bread and drink wine or juice as we do in Communion,

our bodies literally digest these foods and they literally become a part of us.

The bread and drink offers our bodies, literally, nourishment and strength....

these foods offer our bodies life.

The metaphor: that he is food, bread and drink...is meant to help understand how intimately life giving, his life was and is for us...

**Jesus had a mystical connection with his God...
he knew that he was not separate from the Ground of Being,
from the Source of all life,
from the King of the Universe....
He had an intimate, Father/son relationship
with the Holy One of the Cosmos...
and he invited everyone into that relationship...
As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us..."**
(John 17:21)

**Jesus gave his life so that all might trust that God was not/is not
some distant deity sitting on a throne, disconnected from what God had created.**

**Jesus told story after story, parable after parable about Yahweh,
who was more like a Father who loved his children tenderly,
then a condemning Emperor or King....**

**Yahweh was like a Father who watched in the distance
for his wayward child to return home.**

**The Lord God of the Universe was like a woman who lost a coin and who would search and
search till she found it...**

**The life of Jesus of Nazareth:
his teachings and all the healings,
all the prayer, the tears, the laughter, the meals, the sharing,
the forgiving, all the loving of this Man from Nazareth...
it was all made possible because he lived, he was real!
He had a body, he was flesh and blood...
he needed to eat and to rest
and to bathe and to use the bathroom, too!
The one we believe to be the Christ,**

**the Holy one of God,
was able to walk the highways and byways of the cities and towns of Israel
because he had skin....**

Communion is not just about eating blessed bread and drinking blessed wine ...

Com-union...Union with ...

**is all about a deep recognition of the Holiness and the Oneness
of creation with the Creator....**

Communion is all about the inseparable Divine nature of reality...

there is no place that God is not...there is no place that is not sacred

and holy....there is no thing or no one who has not their origin in Divinity....

**Com-union is all about taking in and digesting and making mercy, forgiveness, compassion
joy and love a very real,**

very real,

part of our flesh and blood lives...

hmmmm....so I guess it is all about Communion after all!

Amen....