

## 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B (2021)

Ambiguity is a funny word. It refers to a lack of clarity about how to interpret something. A situation is ambiguous, for example, when information is incomplete, contradicting or too inaccurate to draw clear conclusions. Here are a few examples.

- Sarah gave a bath to her dog wearing a pink t-shirt. Is the dog wearing the pink t-shirt?
- I have never tasted a cake quite like that one before! Was the cake good or bad?
- Did you see her dress? Is she getting dressed or are they talking about her clothes?

We use ambiguous language all the time. We call it “spin” or “talking points” or “my truth.”

Even religious institutions have shown a preference of ambiguity. Is this a table or an altar? Am I a presider or a priest? Are you a “bread distributor” or an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion? Is the Mass a sacrifice or a meal?

Even Jesus, might be accused of being ambiguous in his speech. Recall how the Jews react disbelievingly to his teaching, “... **the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.**”

As Catholics, it’s easy to hear those words and immediately think of the Eucharist. After all, what happens at this sacred table is so central to who we are—the source and summit of our lives, the ultimate expression of who we are as Church.

And while the Eucharist is of central importance to us, that doesn’t mean that it is easy to understand or explain this profound mystery. In fact, we have been wrestling with the meaning of this sacred meal for two thousand years.

And when we hear Jesus say that this “bread” is his flesh for the life of the world, two things immediately should come to mind: his sacrifice on Calvary and this meal we share. It seems pretty clear that Jesus was linking the two— connecting the giving of himself and the giving of this sacred food.

Here was a man (and God) who was going to make the ultimate sacrifice, was going to love and only love— even if it meant he would have to give his life on a cross. No sacrifice was too great for the good of those he loved.

We sometimes forget (or choose to ignore) that the work of Jesus was (and is) not his own. That same work has been entrusted to us—those who call him Lord and God.

Faith is not some kind of admiration society where we simply say, “I love you Jesus,” but rather faith is a living body of people committed to continuing his work, his mission, his deep desire to transform the world.

That’s what it means to truly believe in the Eucharist— being willing to accept and embrace the profound truth that we are to become whom we eat.

We eat the Body of Christ not as some end in itself or some private moment between us and our God—but so we can become the Body of Christ in a world that needs every good and holy and life-giving thing more than ever.

Are we willing to make Jesus’ words our own? Are we willing to give our lives for the life of the world— sacrifice our own desires and wants for the good of others? Will we try to love as he loved (and loves) and forgive as he forgave (and forgives) and show compassion and mercy and understanding and generosity as he did (and does)?

***“From the Eucharist comes strength to live the Christian life and eagerness to share that life with others.”*** St. John Paul II

