

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time August 8, 2021

It would seem that in this week's Gospel, Jesus is having an identity crisis. One would almost think Jesus is intent on confusing his followers. In this short passage, Jesus does not make the message easy to hear. His listeners can't comprehend how Jesus can claim to come down from heaven when they know his parents, Mary and Joseph. They also can't comprehend Jesus' claim that he is the bread of life. The reality of having the Son of God in their midst is too much for them to grasp. The people complained amongst themselves which means they actually began to gossip about Jesus. Their disbelief would keep them from receiving the blessings Jesus intended to bring from above. God sent his son to draw people to himself.

Jesus came to fulfill his Father's mission here on earth and promises anyone who listens to his teaching will be raised up on the last day. In order to accomplish this mission, Jesus gives himself up on the cross for all of us becoming the bread of life, giving us his very flesh.

Actions speak louder than words! How many times have you heard this statement? The sacraments are among the most important ways we Catholics practice, or act out, our faith. In fact, we act out what we believe. Our Catholic faith is a constant call to put into practice what it is we profess in our Creed. We are called to celebrate the Eucharist often!

The sacraments are visible words, as Saint Augustine wrote in the fifth century: "they are words we can see and touch, words we can act out—words we must act upon." The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. It is the source, as all things come from it, and summit because we can't get much higher than this! The Eucharist contains, in a special way, him who is our Way, our Life, and our Truth.

The actions of Jesus speak loud and clear. He gave his very life, his body and blood, on the cross for us. We become what we consume. We take and eat the Eucharist and it becomes part of us so that we may become more like the One we receive. The priest prays "by the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity."

We need to realize there are things we must do and say often so we do not forget who we are and why we are here. Receiving the Eucharist is one of those things we need to do often. Do your actions speak louder than words?

Reflection by Julie de Gouw, Pastoral Minister