

A Foretaste

A monk was giving a tour for some people visiting the monastic grounds. Eventually, they got to the Church where he was explaining to the tourists that Jesus was truly and substantially present in the Eucharist. One of the Christian tourists who didn't believe in the Real Presence piped up and scoffed, "If Jesus was truly present in this Church, I would walk 100 kms on my knees just to see a glimpse of his face."

In some ways, this statement highlights the fact that *if the Word of God through whom all creation came into existence was present at this person's local Church, he/she would do anything just to see him*. Yet at the same time it challenges us because we KNOW Jesus is truly present, we KNOW that he is here. Nonetheless, we are like St. Paul blinded by the brilliance of God's love in the Eucharist and we cry, "Who are you Lord?"

So how do we stir our hearts with great fervor and love to recognize and appreciate Jesus in the breaking of the bread?

We will be able to unveil this mystery in our Gospel if we understand this key term: 'bread from heaven.' When the Israelites were freed from Egypt, the end goal was not freedom from Pharaoh. **The end goal of the Exodus was to reach the Promised Land.** But in order to sustain them on their journey to the Promised Land, God would have to "rain bread from heaven for [them]" (Ex 16:4).

The manna!

What did it taste like? "*The taste of it was like wafers made with honey*" (Ex 16:31).

Why did it taste like honey? It was a foretaste of what the promised land would be like, "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:8). We know this because when the Israelites reached the Promised Land, the manna stopped falling from the sky and they ate from the fruit of the land (cf. Josh 5:10-12).

When Jesus calls himself 'the bread come down from heaven', he gives us the key to interpreting what the Eucharist is meant to be for us in our pilgrimage to the Promised Land of Heaven.

As manna that rained down from heaven was a foretaste of the Land that was to come, so our communion with Jesus in the Eucharist is a foretaste of that blessed union we will share with the Trinity in Jesus.

This life is not the end goal. **Heaven is where our true citizenship is found**, and Jesus truly offers us his body, blood, soul and divinity to eat *NOT in a metaphorical way* but to gnaw, to chew, to munch on his resurrected body and drink his blood. In the Eucharist, we are united with our Blessed Savior, but it is a FORETASTE of the joys that are to come. He gives us his eucharistic presence to sustain us with his love lest we faint along the way and lose sight of the ultimate goal.

Week by week, day by day, as we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we are called to enflame our hearts with greater fervor and love, *to ask for hearts made of NEW WINESKINS which will be stretched by the NEW WINE of God's boundless and everlasting love overflowing in our hearts.*

Moses...made an ark of incorruptible wood which he covered with purest gold wherein to place the tables of Your law; shall I, a creature of corruption, dare so easily to receive You, the Maker of law and the Giver of life?

Solomon, the wisest of the kings of Israel, spent seven years building a magnificent temple...celebrated its dedication with a feast of eight days...offered a thousand victims in Your honor...and I, unhappy and poorest of men, how shall I lead You into my house?¹

See what love he abundantly lavishes upon us in humility so that he may increase our love for him!

As we receive and adore the Eucharist today, let us pray that what we partake here in mystery we may enjoy forever in heaven ***for then we shall see our Lord face to face and behold his unveiled beauty in all its majesty.***

¹ Thomas à Kempis. (1996). [*The Imitation of Christ*](#) (pp. 231–232). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.