

Thirteenth Sunday Pentecost after Pentecost, Gospel Year B

You Are What You Eat

John 6:56-69

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Analysis by Lori A. Cornell

[Jesus said,] ⁵⁶“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” ⁶¹But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. ⁶⁵And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

⁶⁶Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”



Christ's grace turns our attention away from all the worldly cravings that keep promising to satisfy but never do. And satisfied with Christ in us, we look outward—beyond our appetites, beyond ourselves. We become what we eat.

DIAGNOSIS: Misguided Appetite

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): We Devour Each Other

We humans consume natural resources like they are in endless supply and prevent the poorest and most vulnerable from having what they need. Wars consume landscapes meant to provide food and shelter. Politicians value the accumulation of their wealth and power, more than the welfare of the citizens they are called

to represent. Our appetite for the destruction of others is insatiable.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): We Fill Up on Empty Promises

Why do we bite and devour one another? Because, if we want to get ahead, someone is going to end up losing. At least that's what the world has taught us. So we do what we need to do to gain wealth, power, keep some skin in the game. We fill up on empty promises that guarantee us we will be satisfied. But our appetites only grow for more, and better, and enough. There's never enough.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): We Refuse to Take God In

Meanwhile, God offers us himself to satisfy us: "eat of my flesh, and drink of my blood." And we are dismayed by the offer. This is too much. Sure we want to be satisfied. But we have filled up on empty promises, which leaves no room for the food that truly satisfies.

PROGNOSIS: Well Nourished



Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Radical Hospitality

“Whoever eats me, will live because of me,” Jesus says. Jesus doesn’t just want to make his home with us, he wants to make his home in us. Now that’s getting personal. Jesus is not just taking up residence beside us (abiding), he is making us his home. Why? Because if we want to get ahead, someone has to die. And Jesus would rather it was him than us. So, like a firefighter who loses himself in the blaze to save the person trapped in the house, Jesus throws himself in harm’s way—gives us his flesh, so that we may live.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): We Are What We Eat

This gift of Christ's flesh is nearly more than we can take in. Why would he give up so much for us? Because "the one who eats this bread will live forever." Jesus doesn't just want us to exist, he wants us to live fully. And his generosity makes us hold our hands open in wonder. And there—in our empty hands—Jesus places himself, and bids us take and eat. So we do. And his grace is sufficient. In fact, his grace turns our attention away from all the worldly cravings that keep promising to satisfy but never do. And satisfied with Christ in us, we look outward—beyond our appetites, beyond ourselves. We become what we eat.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): Bread for the World

This bread that comes down from heaven, is more than enough to give us life. So, we not only share it, we become that bread as we take Christ's nourishing promises into ourselves. We become bread for the world. Instead of depriving others by seeking to pacify our endless appetites, we look to the needs of others. Instead of ravaging the land, we till and keep it. Instead of accumulating more than we need, we consider who could benefit from the power with which we've been entrusted. And not only are we satisfied, but life is truly more full.