

The Words of Eternal Life

In John 6, many of Jesus' disciples who were listening to His Bread of Life discourse said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Jesus said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? (John 6:62) Jesus knew that what He said about eating His flesh and drinking His blood unsettled His disciples, but He neither takes back nor waters down what He just said. Rather, He tells them that they will see something even more unbelievable in the future – His Ascension into heaven.

What is the meaning of: "It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63)? The disciples tried to understand what Jesus said about eating His flesh and drinking His blood in a physical sense, but trying to understand it in that way not only makes no sense; what's worse, it can even become a "stumbling block" to their faith. On the other hand, it is only by understanding what Jesus said in a spiritual sense, can His words be truly understood – that the flesh and blood that Jesus was talking about was His Body and Blood in the Eucharist. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, He told His disciples to take and eat the Bread which is His Body, and to take and drink the cup which is His Blood. It is only when Jesus' words are understood in this way can they give life to those who hear it.

The Jews began to murmur among themselves when Jesus said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven" (John 6:41), and Jesus said to them, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:44). Then, when Jesus' own disciples began to murmur among themselves because what He said was hard for them to accept, Jesus said a very similar thing to them, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father" (John 6:65).



What is the meaning of: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him." (John 6:65)? St. Augustine once said in his sermon, "Pray that the Father may draw you to His Son." God does not and will not force human free will. Truly, no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him through the grace of faith. Faith is a supernatural virtue given by God – God does not force faith upon the human will; rather, it is a free gift that requires a person to freely accept it.

What is it like to have intimate union with Christ when receiving the Eucharist? St. Cyril of Alexandria (378-444 AD), a doctor of the Church and one of the Church Fathers, once said that as two pieces of wax fuse together to become one, so also does one who receives Holy Communion become so united with Jesus such that Jesus is in him and he is in Jesus. In her autobiography, St. Therese of Lisieux described her First Communion as a fusion with Jesus; she wrote: On that day, it was more than a meeting — it was a complete fusion. We were no longer two, for I had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the mighty ocean.

Is it necessary to receive the Eucharist? Jesus said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:54). Therefore, it is necessary to receive the Eucharist to have eternal life. The Eucharist is necessary for maintaining the life of the soul. The Church advises the faithful to avail themselves of the pure and holy refreshment of Holy Communion and to make a suitable thanksgiving in return. In his papal encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*, Pope Paul VI wrote, "Jesus Christ and the Church desire all Christ's faithful to approach the sacred banquet each day. The basis of this desire is that they should be united to God by the sacrament and draw strength from it to restrain lust, to wash away the slight faults of daily occurrence and to take precautions against the more serious sins to which human frailty is liable." (*Mysterium Fidei* #1905)

The Savior has instituted the most august sacrament of the Eucharist, which truly contains His flesh and Blood, so that he who eats this bread may live forever; therefore, whosoever makes use of it often with devotion strengthens the life of his soul, to the extent that it becomes almost impossible for him to be poisoned by any kind

耶穌聖名華人天主堂
THE HOLY NAME of Jesus CHINESE CATHOLIC MISSION
5395 Light Circle NW, Norcross GA 30071 678-691-3261 hnojatl.org
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of evil affection. On the other hand, Christians who are damned will be unable to make excuses when the just Judge shows them how much they are to blame for the death of their own souls, since it was so easy for them to maintain themselves in spirit and life by eating the Body of Christ which He had left them for this purpose.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are you an adult and have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation? If so, we invite you to join our Confirmation program to prepare you for the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Easter Vigil in 2025. If you are interested, please contact Fr. Bill.



Prayer List: Eva Mullins, David Wang, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing, Pan Bohao and Xu Taicheng.



Reserve the date: Fr. Bill encourages all parishioners to make plans to participate in the Eucharistic Congress in Atlanta next year on June 20-21, 2025. Our church will host the first-ever Chinese Track in the Eucharistic Congress. This is an incredible opportunity for all of us to see and experience the great number of Catholics in Atlanta united under the One Body of Christ!

Attention children and parents: Sunday School will resume on August 25, 2024. Class schedule for schoolyear 2024-2025 is now available in the church foyer and on the church website. Please

register with Long Che Chan. Our first class on August 25 will be on **Safe Environment**. Parents are invited to sit in this class to benefit from information regarding the safety and well-being of your children.

Our Fall garage sale will be on Saturday, September 7, 2024 from 8am to 2pm. Please check if you have clothes, household and gift items in good condition to donate. You may start bringing donated items anytime before August 25. Please sign up with Daisy and Angela Ooi if you can help during the garage sale.

Come and celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival with us on September 15, 2024. We will have a lantern parade by the children of our parish after the 10:30am Mass, our community potluck, riddles for adults and prizes for the best lantern and riddle winner!



| Mass Schedule | Confessions | Bible Study |
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| Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese) | Sundays 9:00-9:30 AM | Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese) |
| Sundays 2:00 PM (English) | Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM | Mondays 6:00 PM (English) |
| | By Appointment | |
| Mondays 12:00 PM (English) | | Eucharistic Adoration |
| Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English) | Anointing of the Sick | Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM |
| Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese) | First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass | Tuesdays 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM |
| Fridays 12:00 PM (English) | | |
| First Friday 7:00 PM (English) | | |
| First Saturday 10:00 AM (Chinese) | | |