

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

(Rev. Father Muller, in "The Teacher of Manhood")

Continued from Last Week

"It is the spirit that quickeneth," says Our Lord to them; "the flesh profiteth nothing." That is to say, there is no absurdity in saying that the flesh is not able to bestow life; the nature of the flesh is such that of itself it cannot vivify in any way. On the contrary, it stands in need of a vivifying power. Now, were you to believe that I am your God and Saviour, were you to consider the mystery of the Incarnation, were you to believe that the divinity is united to my humanity in one person, you would also understand that my flesh is food indeed and that my blood is drink indeed. You would understand that he who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him, and thus hath everlasting life. It is therefore very foolish on your part to be scandalized at my words. If you think that my flesh cannot infuse life into you, how shall it ascend to Heaven? And yet this spectacle shall be placed before your own eyes. What will you say then? When you see my flesh ascend to Heaven, which, to all seeming, is contrary to its nature, will you still say that my flesh contains no vivifying power?

"You must, then, believe me to be what I have so often told you. The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life. My flesh is not flesh only, it is spirit also, because it is perfectly united to divinity, and assumes the entire vivifying power of my Godhead. Although your human body is subjected to death by sin, and forced to yield to corruption yet if I am in you, by means of my own proper flesh you shall assuredly rise again. For it is incredible, yea, rather, it is impossible, that life should not vivify those in whom it lives. It is by means of my own flesh that I wish to hide life within you, and to introduce into you, as it were a certain seed, of incorruption, which destroys what is in you corruptible in you. For, receiving within yourselves both my human and divine nature, you will become glorified by becoming sharers in that nature which is above all things." It is thus that St. Cyril confounds the Jews for daring to say: "How can this man give us His Flesh?"

In the sixteenth century some apostate Catholics—calling themselves Protestants—in their pride and ignorance sought to imitate the Jews in contradicting Our Saviour. They said that He spoke only figuratively when He promised, and commanded us to eat His Flesh. Now such an assertion is absurd and ridiculous as it is false and blasphemous. In Hebrew, and in all the Oriental languages, the expression, "to eat one's flesh," when taken figuratively, means, to backbite, to slander, to persecute, and nothing else. To say, then that Our Saviour spoke only figuratively would be to say that He commands us, under pain of eternal damnation, to backbite and to slander Him.

When Our Lord Jesus Christ had made this extraordinary promise to the Jews, did they really understand Him to say that He would give them His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink? They clearly did understand Him so, and for this reason asked in astonishment: "How can this man give us His Flesh to eat?" And some of them said "This is a hard saying, who can hear it!" And even many of His disciples were so shocked at the idea of eating the Flesh of Jesus, and drinking His Blood, that they went away from Him altogether, and never went with Him any more. The Jews, then, did not understand Our Lord to have spoken figuratively, for had they done so, there was no reason for being shocked at His words. The whole Jewish religion was made up of types and figures, so that if Our Lord had spoken figuratively, it would have been nothing new to them. No, the Jews understood Him to speak of eating His very Flesh and drinking His very Blood.

But the question is: Did Our Saviour wish the Jews to understand Him in this manner? Most certainly He did. Our Lord saw that the Jews understood Him to speak of eating His real Flesh and drinking His real Blood. Instead of contradicting that opinion, He confirmed it again and again, in the strongest and most unmistakable terms. Had his intention been to give them His Flesh and Blood to eat in a figurative manner only, would he not, and should He not have corrected the mistake of the Jews then and there. He had come on earth to banish falsehood and error, and to teach the truth. Must He not then have told the truth at that moment!

Jesus Christ gave Himself to us as a model; we were to learn from Him how to speak the truth with honesty and sincerity. Could He then act as an imposter only to deceive us? Even to think

of such a thing would be blasphemous. An imposter usually makes fine promises; he exaggerates the value of what he promises to give, but an honest man will rather underrate than exaggerate the value of what he promises, especially if he sees that his friends really believe his words, and that any exaggeration whatever would be productive of great evils.

Suppose you promise a friend of yours to make him a present of a fine house, but you intend to give him only a picture of the house which you have in your room. You see however, that your friend believes that you intend to give him a real house, you foresee, moreover that this misunderstanding of his will be the cause of long and bitter quarrels and law suits. Are you not bound by every sense of honesty, charity and justice to inform him that he has misunderstood you, that you intend to give him only a picture of your house. Our Lord promises, in the clearest terms; to give us His Flesh to eat, He sees that the Jews, His disciples, and His Apostles, understand His words literally. He sees many already take offence and leave Him, He knows that by leaving Him they incur eternal damnation. He sees that in after-times disputes and quarrels will rise among men as to what is the real meaning of His words; that many will understand them literally, while others will take them in another sense. Was it not His most sacred duty to explain beyond doubt the meaning of His words. If He wished to be understood figuratively, should he not have said: "My children, you misunderstand Me. I will not give you My real Flesh and Blood, but only a figure of my Flesh". But instead of speaking thus, and correcting the Jews He on the contrary, confirms what he has said. He repeats, at least five times, that He will really give us His Flesh to eat. And as our Lord foresaw that there would be many who would refuse to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, He solemnly threatens eternal damnation to all those who refuse. "Unless you eat my Flesh and drink my Blood, you shall not have life in you." While to all who obey Him, He promises eternal life. "He that eateth My Flesh hath life everlasting." He asserts twice that what he has spoken is a literal statement; for the Greek word "alethos," means true and literal. "For My Flesh is meat indeed—i. e. it can be eaten indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed"—i. e., it can be drunk in very deed.

Jesus Christ at first said that He would give us bread from Heaven, a living bread, but now to take away every shadow of doubt, He tells us that the Bread which He will give is His Flesh; while, to convince us, that He really intends to give us His Flesh, he says, "He that eateth Me shall live by Me." And to confirm all this and take away every shadow of doubt and of excuse, He swears in the most solemn manner, at least four times, that He will give us His real Flesh and Blood, that He will give us Himself to be our food. "Amen, amen I say unto you," etc., etc. Now in Hebrew, "amen," when used thus is equivalent to an oath. Again Jesus swears, by His mission and by His life, that He will give us Himself to be our food. "As the living Father hath sent Me, and as I live by the Father, he that eateth Me," etc. Now what stronger, what clearer language could Our Lord have used to convince us that He really intended to give us His Flesh and His Blood; It is impossible to furnish stronger proofs for any single truth in the whole Christian religion. No wonder that Our Blessed Lord was filled with sadness when He saw, in spite of all that he had said and done, there would still be many who would be lost for not believing in His words.

"What!" said He, turning to the unbelieving Jews, "does this scandalize you? You do not believe that I can give you My Flesh to eat? What then will you say when you see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?" Jesus Christ appeals to the mystery of his ascension, to show us that it is just as easy for Him to give us His Sacred Body to be our food, as it is for Him to ascend with that Body to the right hand of God in Heaven. He appeals to his ascension, to convince us that just as certain as His Body is now in Heaven so certain is it that His Body is now also in the Blessed Eucharist.

Whenever Jesus Christ has spoken figuratively in public, He always explained Himself in private to His Disciples. But here He speaks in private as in public, to show us that He does not speak figuratively, that He wishes to be understood literally. When He saw that many, even of His own disciples, left Him because they would not believe His words He turned to the twelve, to His chosen beloved Apostles, and instead of giv-

ing them any explanation, He asked them: "Will you also go away." As if saying: I have told you the truth, I cannot change what I have said; for it is the truth. If you will not believe me you also may go.

Indeed, the Christian, who after so many clear, unanswerable proofs sees not the truth, must in very deed be willfully blind. He is like the owl, that closes his eyes at mid-day, and flaps its wings and says: The sun does not shine, for I do not see it. If Jesus Christ left us only a figure of His Body, if He left us, after all only a piece of bread, why did He use so many, precautionary measures in order to persuade us. Why did He insist so much upon the necessity of faith. For faith is to believe in something that we do not see. If Jesus Christ left us only a piece of bread, why did He tell us that it is far superior even to manna. Why did He tell us in so many formal and affirmative propositions that He would really give us His Flesh to eat. If He intended only to give us a piece of bread, what need was there to appeal to the great miracle of His Ascension. If He intended to give us His Body figuratively, why did He suffer the Jews, His own Disciples, even, to go away, without modifying a single word of His oft-repeated assertion, that He would really give us His Flesh to eat. Jesus, seeing that the Jews and many of His disciples would not believe that He was to give them His Flesh and Blood as food for their souls, suffered them to go away offended, and when they were gone, He said to the twelve: "Will ye also go away." Then Simon Peter answered in the name of all: "Lord, to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ the Son of God." (V. 68 70.)

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Ecclesiastical Directory

PROVINCE OF ST. BONIFACE.

This Province was erected by His Holiness Pius IX Sept. 22, 1871, and comprehends 1st. The Archdiocese of St. Boniface. 2nd. The Diocese of St. Albert. 3rd. The Vicariate Apostolic of Athabasca. 4th. The Vicariate Apostolic of British Columbia.

ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. BONIFACE.
Comprising the Province of Manitoba a portion of the N. W. Territories, and the District of Keewatin.

Former Bishop—Rt. Rev. J. N. Provencher first Bishop of the country and founder of the ecclesiastical Province of St. Boniface, d. June 7, 1853.

Arch. Most Rev. Alexander Tache, O. M. I., D. D., cons. Bishop of Arath, and coadjutor of Bishop Provencher, Nov. 23, 1851, translated to St. Boniface, Dec. 17, 1853; succeeded Archbishop of St. Boniface the day of the erection of the metropolitan See, Sept. 22, 1871.

CHURCHES AND CLERGY.

St. Boniface Cathedral, Rev. F. A. Dugas, P. P., J. Messier, curate; A. Malsonneuve, O. M. I., agent for the Province of N. W. T. George Dugas chaplain of the academy Joseph McCarthy O. M. I. secretary. St. Vital, attended from St. Boniface.

St. Mary's Winnipeg; Revs. M. Ouillette, O. M. I., P. P. and F. Cahill, O. M. I. Curate. Church of Immaculate Conception, Winnipeg; Rev. A. A. Cherrier.

Provincial Penitentiary, Rev. C. Cloutier. Rat Portage, Rev. T. L. Baudin, O. M. I. St. Patrick's Church, Selkirk and Peguis—Rev. J. Allard, O. M. I.

St. Norbert, Rev. J. M. Ritchot. St. Agathe—Revs. C. Samoisette and P. elletier.

St. Francois Xavier, Rev. F. X. Kavanagh. Bale St. Paul, Rev. Fortier. St. Charles, Rev. Danneberg, O. M. I.

St. Anne des Chenes and St. Joachim, Rev. Girard. Lorette, Rev. J. Dufresne.

St. Laurent and other missions of Lake Manitoba, Revs. F. Camper, M. J. H. Gascon, O. M. I., J. Campeau, Dupont, O. M. I. and Bro. Mulvehill, catechist.

Lake Qu'Appelle Fort Ellice, and the missions West, Revs. L. Lebert, O. M. I., J. Decourby, O. M. I., J. Hugonard, O. M. I. Magnan and LePage.

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St. Pierre de la Riviere aux Plats Rev J. Joly, St. Pie and Emerson J. N. Jutra Rev J. Fort Alexander, Rev A. Madore, O. M. I. and Bro. Boyle.

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St. Alphonse and, M. D. de Lourdes Rev L. Campeau. St. Hubert Portage la Prairie, Rev J. McCarthy O. M. I.

Brandon, Rev J. Robillard Regina, Rev. D. Graton. Wood Mountain, Moose Jaw, and medicine Hat Rev P. St. Germain O. M. I.

EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS
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Course of Studies—Theology, Classics, and commercial course in English and French Pupils—38.

St. Mary's Institute, Winnipeg; two houses—Brothers of the Congregation of Mary Bro. William (director), Pupils 188.

St. Boniface Academy for Young Ladies sisters of Charity (Gray Nuns), Boarders 60; day scholars 120.

St. Vital's school, for day scholars—Sisters of Charity, Pupils 60.

St. Norbert's school—Sisters of Charity, Boarders 20, day scholars 60.

St. Francis Xavier's school day scholars—Sisters of Charity, Pupils 55.

St. Mary's academy (Winnipeg) day scholars and boarders—sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Sister superior Mary John of God, Boarders 60, day scholars 130.

School of Immaculate Conception (Winnipeg)—sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Pupils 70.

St. Joseph's Convent, (Brandon)—sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus, Sister M. A. Reer sup. Pupils 70.

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