

21st B Cycle Sunday of the Year homily notes 8-26-18

- **OT manna; God sustained the Israelites on their journey. Jesus claims, “I am the living bread come down from heaven.”**
- **Unless you drink, my flesh and drink my blood, you shall not have life within you.**
 - **Drinking blood of animals was not permitted (blood was the sign of life. Jewish kosher laws)**
 - **Jesus is preaching in the temple area.**
 - **Many of his disciples returned to their former way of life.**
 - **A few of his disciples said, “We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”**

Even today believing in the living presence of Christ in the Eucharist is very challenging.

It is a very slow process. It is like learning to ride a bicycle.

Example:

- **When we are very young we learn to ride a tricycle: Our ability to ride rests on the extra wheel, miracle of bread; receiving first**

communion; total trust in the community; miracles and expelling of demons

- **Eventually we begin riding free and on your own: we have a number of falls but we get up and gain speed. We get more and more advanced.**
 - **Some of us ride along the riverfront.**
 - **Some of us make long trips on our bikes;**
 - **many of us grew up delivering newspapers on our bikes;**
 - **some even get so good that they qualify for the Tour de France going down mountain passes at 45 miles an hour.**

Learning to ride a bike is a process. So is coming to believe in the Eucharist a process.

Stages of belief in the gospel:

First stage of riding a tricycle: Healings, Miracles over nature, and expelling of demons

Training wheels: Commandments, sermon on the mount

Riding free: Beatitudes; dying and rising with Christ

Stages in our own belief of the Eucharist

First stage: tricycle stage: first communion. The bread is the body of Christ; the wine is the blood of Christ. Totally dependent on the community of faith for belief.

- **Second stage: training wheel stage: We are wobbly. We learn to be less dependent on older adults to teach us about the Eucharist and begin to trust ourselves. We hear the Sermon on the Mount; to love our enemies; to not steal, we learn how to how to follow the Lord: We learn the commandments (sixth commandment, fifth commandment), love God and Love neighbor; love one another as I have loved you. We fall a number of times, but we get up and begin again.**

The third stage is like learning to ride without training wheels. We start to really come to believe in the presence of the Lord in our lives and in the Eucharist. The theologian, Ron Rolheiser, says that adult belief in the Eucharist involves two very important acts:

- **First, we must give my life away; in how one lives their lives: parents caring for their children; teachers helping young people grow in wisdom and knowledge; health care professionals who dedicate themselves to those in need; priests and sisters and those who minister in the Church**

sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ; Senator John McCain (training wheels; getting up; standing on his own.)

- Second, I must give my death away: It is confronting death believing that the risen Lord has prepared a place for us to be with him. It is like racing in the Tour de France at breakneck speed in the Spirit. It involves abandonment to Christ and following his way of living.
- Belief in the Eucharist takes years of experience of life; support of a team, total trust in the Spirit.

Jesus said, “This is my body, given for you. This is my blood, poured out for you. Do this is memory of me.”

They are simple words; “This is my body, given for you. This is my blood, poured out for you. Do this is memory of me.” Simple words, but a whole new way of living.

Lord to whom shall we go; you have the words of eternal life.