



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint John 6: 41-51.

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Introductory Prayer:

Father, I believe in you with all my heart. I trust in your infinite goodness and mercy. Thank you for so patiently guiding me along the pathway to everlasting life. I love you and offer you all that I have and all that I do, for your glory and the salvation of souls.

Petition:

Lord, give me faith to believe that you are the Bread of Life.

1. Faith is Free for the Pure of Heart:

Sometimes we think that had we only lived in Jesus' day it would have been so much easier to believe. However, this passage makes it clear that not only is faith a gift, but that to believe we must have certain dispositions of the heart. Those who murmur against Jesus are closing themselves off to the gift of faith, since the Father does not force our freedom; those who listen to the prophets and to the Father with humility and an open heart will be drawn to Jesus by the Father's love. Today we need these same dispositions. Without them, what God reveals will seem too difficult to accept or to live out – even appearing absurd to our human way of reasoning. These dispositions of the heart are so essential. We need to be less sure of ourselves and more dependent on

listening to what God is saying to us in order to receive the gift of faith.

2. Bread That Was Less Filling:

The manna which sustained the Israelites in the desert was a foreshadowing of the Eucharist. God fed his people with manna throughout their long journey to the Promised Land. Yet that bread did not give eternal life; indeed, the Israelites rebelled and complained and fell into sin again and again. They were looking more for material comfort and satisfaction in this world than for the hope and joy that comes from being led by God to a new life. In the Eucharist, God feeds us with the Bread of Eternal Life and leads us on the journey of this life to an entirely new life in him, which gives all our sufferings and difficulties meaning and hope. Let's renew our faith in the True Bread that gives us life.

3. I'm Gonna Live Forever:

Eternal life begins now for those who believe that Jesus is the Bread of Life. Through faith in the Eucharist, we enter into this new life that is qualitatively different from a life that is bound up in the world and seeks only pleasure and comfort within the material confines of our limited existence. Ultimately, human life – even the richest, the most successful, and most powerful – becomes a gray monotony unless there is hope in something new and greater than this existence down below. To live forever is not simply to go on endlessly in time, it is to enter a new dimension: into a life in God, who is our true fulfillment and peace.

Conversation with Christ:

Lord, give me always this Bread of Life. Open my heart and my soul to long for this new life that only you can bring me through the Eucharist. Give me the humility and simplicity to listen to you and to believe that you have the words of eternal life.

Resolution:

I will spend time before the Blessed Sacrament and read all of Chapter Six of St. John's Gospel, in which Jesus gives his discourse on the Bread of Life. I will ask the Holy Spirit to deepen my faith that the Eucharist is the center of my life, and I will embrace the teaching that nothing else has as much importance as true devotion to the Eucharist.