

**OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA WEYMOUTH**  
**HOMILY FOR TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B)**

**19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2012**

The Gospel today concludes Our Lord's explanation of himself as the Bread of Life according to St. John.

Last week Jesus was telling "the Jews" that their whereas their ancestors had eaten bread from heaven in the form of manna which had satisfied their physical hunger temporarily but done nothing to prevent their eventual death, Jesus is the living bread and anyone "who eats this bread will live for ever."

Jesus offered them and offers us living bread – bread that gives eternal life – and he himself is this bread.

This is truly extraordinary and amazing.

How did the Jews respond? Did they rejoice? No, they started arguing with one another. "How can this be?"

As we shall hear next week Jesus' wonderful promise became a cause of disagreement.

Sadly the question, "How can this be?" split the Church at the Reformation and still causes people to reject the Church.

Jesus says "My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink."

But isn't that cannibalism?

No. This is his glorified body, his post-resurrection body, the body that was freed from physical limitations and ascended into heaven.

We may not doubt but others do. How should we respond?

Here are two ways to reduce doubt.

Firstly, resist the temptation to ask **how** God works.

We do not need to know how, although it is reasonable to wonder.

The more important question to ask is **why** does Jesus promise so much?

The key question is: Is Jesus' promise of the bread of life reasonable?

If God's love for us is perfect, as it must be if it is from God, then he will give us all that we need to help our own love to grow. We need the bread of life, so his promise is reasonable.

The second point is to realise that Jesus' teaching is often unexpected and offers more than we can imagine.

As we prayed in our opening prayer God has prepared for those who love him "good things which no eye can see."

What we need the **perception** that our first reading mentions.

Perception is the skill of seeing what is really there. Perception is what I need in the supermarket when I look for something on the shelves and cannot see it even though it is right in front of me.

"Use your eyes" Perception means just that – using the eyes of our mind.

There two points for prayer – learning to ask why rather than how God works and developing perception.

Good scientists demonstrate both points.

Those using the Hadron Collider to look for the Higgs Boson Particle started with the question, why? Why look for it? We cannot see it.

However they were convinced that the particle was there because their questions about the universe could not be fully answered without it.

In the same way our questions about the love of God in the world cannot be fully answered without Jesus as the Bread of Life.

As a result of their conviction the scientists spent years of their lives looking for the particle.

How much effort do we make to look for the truth in Jesus' teaching?

People always give maximum time, effort and money to get what they really want.

How much do we really want the Bread of Life?

Like good scientists let's answer the question "why" before we ask "how"; and let's pray for the patience and perception to look for the truth that lies hidden in the words of Jesus just as the Higgs Boson particle lies hidden in physical matter.

The study of physics gives us only knowledge; the Gospel of the Lord gives us eternal life.

**Rev Geoff Carey**