

Reading: John 6:56-69

There's a saying "We are what we eat." The idea is that if we eat healthy, then we become healthy. At this time of lockdown, it becomes even more important that we eat well. I was hugely helped by watching the movie 'Elf'. In this movie the Elf, played by Will Ferrell, names the four food groups, they are of course ... **candy, candy canes, candy corns, and syrup**. There is even a t-shirt with an elf food pyramid to help you in your diet. Remember though, you are what you eat.

Today Jesus is saying something that would have really upset his first audience. The Hebrew people had always been mandated not to eat blood, and yet Jesus is offering his own flesh and blood. They are clearly offended and at the end of the passage even thinking about leaving him altogether.

This teaching about abiding in Jesus by consuming his body and blood is the cornerstone of why we have the Eucharist week by week, even day by day.

For some reason which escapes me, Christians have argued for centuries about how, and when, and even if the bread and the wine at communion become Jesus. Views vary from it really becoming his body and blood through to communion simply being a memorial meal. And often sadly these arguments have divided us, but they all miss the point.

The real transformation that is meant to take place, the most important transformation, the one that Jesus longs for, is our transformation. We are what we eat. In receiving the bread and wine, we are meant to become the body of Jesus in the world.

In this most intimate of moments with Jesus we are meant to become what we eat, we become Jesus. The church, you and I, are the body of Christ, we are Jesus in the world, His body.

We are to become love for the world. Just as Jesus gave himself for us in love. We are to give of ourselves in love for the world.

It's really easy to know how to do this in lockdown. We physically distance ourselves. Notice we physically distance not socially distance. We need to be even socially closer. Whether it's an encouraging phone call, a wave to a neighbour, an email. The Care Bears have been contacting some of our parish family. If you need groceries, please let me know as I have a number of very generous church people willing to shop for you. If you need food, we have a parishioner who runs a food bank and can deliver food to you. If you are anxious, you can ring me. As Christians we also have a superpower that we can bring to lockdown. We can pray. We can pray for our neighbour, our government, those we know who are sick. Prayer is a gift that the body of Christ brings to the party.

We receive the sacrament of Holy Communion because we need to know Jesus is close, but we also receive it to become what we eat, the body of Christ in the world.

This is all very well Nick, I hear you say, but what if people don't care what we do for them, what if they reject our caring, what if they are grumpy and difficult.

Written in Mother Teresa's own hand on the wall of an orphanage in Calcutta are these words:

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centred.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.

Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

May we who have eaten at this table and will again one day soon, become what we eat, the body of Christ, and in this time of lockdown may we embody His love in the world.