

There is an old Latin saying: *Repetitio est mater studiorum*. Which means: Repetition is the mother of learning.

We've all been subject to this in one way or another. Students memorize and are drilled on spelling lists and multiplication tables; the names of the 50 states and their capitol cities. Songs and poetry are repeated aloud or silently while thinking about them. Phone numbers, shopping lists, addresses ... all are things one might say over and over so as to not forget them.

Indeed, repetition most certainly helps us to learn and to remember many things from many different subject areas.

Today is the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

In the Gospel, we continue to hear from St. John's sixth chapter from what is called "The Bread of Life Discourse." Two weeks ago, Jesus stunned the crowds by telling them that He is the Bread of Life. Last week, He repeats it twice more in case anyone missed it. And this week, He drives His point home speaking half-a-dozen times about the living bread, or the heavenly bread, and each time indicating that this is His flesh, and it is to be eaten.

Over and over, in today's Gospel, we hear bread, flesh, eat.

Yet the crowd has mixed feelings on this. Last week we heard that some folks grumbled about this. Don't we know this guy? They asked each other.

This week the people are quarreling – struggling to grasp the concept ... trying to understand.

And next week, some will murmur ... and eventually just walk away.

These three reactions to Christ's teaching on the Bread of Life are nothing new.

In the Book of Wisdom, we hear how God's wisdom is offered to the simple ... those who are naive. We might consider them a blank slate, willingly able to receive God's wisdom.

But in the previous chapters of Wisdom, this Divine wisdom is also offered to the arrogant and the foolish.

But the foolish don't care about wisdom, and turn their backs on it. And the arrogant think they already know everything, and don't need to listen. By today's reading, Wisdom has given up on the foolish and the arrogant ... and goes after the simple ... those who are teachable ... those who can learn ... those who know that they need to know.

This, of course, begs the question: What is our reaction when we listen to the Word of God? How do we respond when Jesus speaks to us ... in God's Word ... in our prayer ... in the Sacraments?

If we truly believe that we have heard it all ... or know it all ... or have it all figured out – How can we receive God's message for us?

If we've lost interest ... or don't think it applies to us ... or are apathetic – How will we hear God's truth – if we aren't even listening?

It is imperative that we remain open to God's voice ... and receive His message in our hearts when it comes to us in Word or in Sacrament.

If we abide in Christ ... in simplicity of heart ... St. Paul tells us that we will abide in God's Holy Will ... in joy and in gratitude.

Above all, in the Eucharist, we must approach in fear and trembling ... conscious of our unworthiness, but confident of God's call for us to take and eat.

Jesus Christ is indeed the Bread of Life ... the Bread that came down from heaven ... so that we might have life ... the fullness of life ... eternal life ... by receiving Him and remaining in Him ... through Word and Sacrament.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us open our hearts to God's grace and mercy ... so that we might be transformed into true disciples of Christ's. Let us be open to what He has to say to us ... in the Word of God ... but also in the Word Made Flesh ... the Bread of Life ... the Bread of Heaven ... the Most Holy Eucharist ... offered for our salvation.