

REFLECTION



Scientists tell us that we are literally connected to one another and to all things—part of one vast web of life in our universe. It is not a metaphor or a symbol; it is true that the material of all of our bodies is intrinsically related because it emerged from and is caught up in a single energetic event that is the unfolding of the universe. Our common ancestry stretches back through life forms and into the stars, back to the primeval explosion of light that began our universe. Atoms that may have been part of Jesus' body are now part of our bodies.

Today's readings invite us to claim this interconnectedness with Christ and with one another, for the ongoing life and flourishing of the world. In the Gospel Jesus urges his followers to eat his flesh and drink his blood. The phrase "flesh and blood" is a way of expressing the totality of a person; believers partake wholly in the full being of Christ. At the same time, this language of eating flesh and drinking blood is offensive. The Greek word *trogein*, "eat," in verse 54 is a very graphic one that literally means "to gnaw" or "to munch." Moreover, in other places in the Scriptures, "eater of flesh" is an expression applied to an adversary who is seeking to destroy a person (Ps 27:2). Drinking blood would be equally abhorrent to Jesus' disciples, as blood is regarded as the life force over which only God has power, and is therefore not to be consumed by humans (Gn 9:4; Dt 12:23; Acts 15:20). Eating flesh and drinking blood also speaks of brutal slaughter (Jer 19:9; 46:10; Ez 39:17). It is no wonder that some of Jesus' disciples found this saying too difficult and decided they would no longer follow him (Jn 6:60-66).

The Bread of Life discourse is immediately followed by the note that Jesus did not wish to go about in Judea because his opponents were looking for an opportunity to kill him (Jn 7:1). Likewise the synoptic Gospels connect Jesus' gift of his flesh and blood to his impending death (Mt 26:26-29, Mk 14:22-25, Lk 22:14-23).

This context gives us some insight into the meaning of Jesus' offer of his flesh and blood for us to eat and drink. When his own flesh and blood are about to be devoured in brutal slaughter, he pre-empted this act by offering his flesh and blood, the whole of his being, to those who believe in his manner of bringing life to the world. Who and what he is cannot be consumed or annihilated by those who would want to inhibit the life-giving forces Jesus has unleashed in the world. When his disciples take in and become all that he is, the life forces he enfleshed continue to be offered for the life of the world.

In recent years a number of experiments have shown the power of groups who intentionally focus their energy on undermining violent forces and effecting peace. One such project was the National Demonstration Project in Washington, D.C. During the two months of the summer of 1993 when a group of 4,000 persons meditated, the rate of violent crimes dropped by as much as 48 percent. It immediately rose again after they stopped meditating. (For other similar experiments, see www.worldpeaceproject.org/news.)

The interconnectedness of all persons and all life in the body of Christ is not an abstract concept; it is palpable and visible. One can choose to be a destructive eater of flesh and drinker of blood or to consume and be consumed by the one whose intent is for the ongoing life of the whole world. *America Magazine—June 2011*

FAITH FORMATION

Registration for Children's Faith Formation program begins now through September 15th. Registration forms are available in the Narthex to pick up and are also available at the parish office (M-F 9:00A-4:00P). A copy of your child's baptism certificate is required for all classes (if you haven't turned one in already), along with fees are due at time of registration. NOTE: NDS Registration forms for Communion and Confirmation will be distributed when school resumes.

- Confirmation (2 yr program - 6th-8th grades+) - Classes are held on Tuesday's from 5:00P-6:15P throughout the school year to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Please note: all requirements must be met in 1st Year in order to continue to 2nd year Confirmation prep.
- Kindergarten (5-6 years old) - Children attend classes on Wednesday from 3:45-4:45P; classes are no longer available on Sunday's. (Children must be 5 yrs by 12/1/11)
- First Holy Communion (2 yr program - 1st -3rd grades) - 1st year children attend classes on scheduled Wednesday's from 3:45-4:45P and 2nd year from 4:00-5:00P and 5:15-6:15P throughout the school year to prepare for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion.
- Faith Formation (3rd-6th grades) - Children who have received their first Holy Communion and are entering their age specific classes will attend elementary grade classes on Thursday's from 4:15-5:15P weekly throughout the school year. Please note: Children in 6th grade who have not had FF classes since Communion will be placed in these classes.
- OCIC - Order of Christian Initiation for Children (Non baptized children 8 yrs and older or baptized children who have not received First Communion) - Children meet on Thursday's from 5:30-6:30P weekly throughout the school year to prepare to receive their Sacraments. Please note: children enrolled in this program must also attend their age appropriate class.

Children's Faith Formation will begin during the 10:00A mass on Sunday, Sept 18 (Catechetical Sunday). Parent/Child meetings will immediately follow the week of 9/26-10/7 to inform parents of requirements for each program, calendar and Q&A. Call the parish office at 447-2354 with any questions.

NEW PAROCHIAL VICAR

A warm welcome to our new parochial vicar,

FR. JOSÉ BELTRAN.

*He will be joining our Parish
on Friday, July 1, 2011.*

