

The Bread of Life

The Feeding & the Discourse — **John 6** · Tuesday, September 1, 2026 · 7:00–8:30 PM · **Parish Center**

Two things to watch tonight. (1) **The sign and its meaning** — Jesus multiplies bread, then says what it is: "my flesh is true food." (2) **New creation / divinization** — God gives himself as food, so that God dwells in us. The Eucharistic heart of John.

Follow the numbers ① → @ through the evening; jot in the margins and in "My Notes" at the end.

① Where We Left Off

- The signs each **point beyond themselves** to who Jesus is.
- Tonight the sign *and* its meaning arrive together — bread multiplied, then explained.
- John 6 = the **Eucharistic heart** of the gospel.

② The Setting

- "The **Passover** was near" (6:4) — John flags it on purpose.
- Mountainside, hungry crowd — **Moses, manna, Passover** all in the air.
- Next day, in the synagogue, the free lunch becomes his hardest sermon.

John 6:4 · 6:59

③ The Fourth Sign — Feeding the 5000

"Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks (εὐχαριστήσας), distributed them... they were filled... twelve baskets left." (6:11–13)

- Five barley loaves + two fish → **5000 fed**, twelve baskets over.
- The crowd wants a **bread-king** (6:15) — the gift, not the Giver.

④ Walking on the Water

- That night Jesus comes **walking on the sea** (6:16–19).
- "It is I; do not be afraid" — **egō eimi** (6:20), the divine Name.
- The bread-giver is the **Lord of creation** who treads the deep.

John 6:16–21 · Ex 3:14 · Ps 77:19

⑤ Manna → the True Bread

- The crowd quotes Moses: "bread from heaven" (manna, Ex 16; Ps 78:24).
- Jesus: not Moses — my Father gives the **true** bread (6:32).
- The fathers ate manna and **died** (6:49); this bread gives life death can't touch.

John 6:31–51 · Ex 16 · Ps 78:24

⑥ "I AM the Bread of Life"

- The first great **"I am"** saying (6:35, 48, 51).
- "Whoever comes to me shall not hunger... never thirst" (6:35).
- First **faith** in him (6:35–47) — then he raises it to **eating** (6:51).

John 6:35, 48–51

⑦ "My Flesh Is True Food"

- "The bread I will give is my **flesh** (σάρξ), for the life of the world" (6:51).
- The verb hardens: "eat" → **τρώγω**, to **gnaw / chew** (6:54–58).
- "My flesh is **true** food... he abides in me and I in him" (6:55–56).

John 6:51–58

⑧ "This Is a Hard Saying"

- "Who can listen to it?" (6:60) — even **disciples** balk.
- "Many turned back and no longer walked with him" (6:66).
- He **lets them go** — he never says "it was only a symbol."

John 6:60–66

⑨ "To Whom Shall We Go?"

- "Do you also want to leave?" (6:67).
- Peter: "Lord, **to whom shall we go?** You have the words of eternal life" (6:68).
- Faith = **staying** with him when the saying is hard.

John 6:67–69

⑩ The Food of the New Creation

- "Whoever eats my flesh... **abides in me, and I in him**" (6:56) — the indwelling of John 17.
- Not manna repeated but a **new food**: God given as food, so God dwells in us.
- The Fathers: the **"medicine of immortality"** (Ignatius) — **divinization**.

John 6:56 · Jn 17:21–23 · 2 Pet 1:4

Manna → the True Bread: the typology at a glance		
Manna, "bread from heaven" (Ex 16; Ps 78:24)	→	"I am the bread of life" — the true bread (6:32–35)
Passover near; the lamb slain (6:4; Ex 12)	→	"My flesh, given for the life of the world" (6:51)
"He gave thanks" over the loaves (6:11)	→	The Mass — took, blessed, broke, gave
Wisdom's banquet: "eat of my bread" (Prov 9:5)	→	Christ the Wisdom of God, who feeds us himself
God treads the sea (Ps 77:19; Job 9:8)	→	Walking on the water — "egō eimi" (6:19–20)

Why not "just symbolic"?

John 6 is the strongest answer. The crowd took him **literally** and objected (6:52) — and instead of softening it, Jesus **intensified** it (flesh, blood, "gnaw," 6:53–58). When **disciples walked away** over it, he **let them go** (6:66) — the only teaching in the Gospels that empties the room. A teacher clarifies a misunderstood metaphor; he confirmed it. And Paul: eating unworthily is guilt **"against the body and blood"** (1 Cor 11:27–29) — you cannot profane a mere symbol. (CCC 1374: "truly, really, and substantially.")

New creation — not repair

Not Eden's manna repeated (a daily top-up that still ends in death), but a **new food**: the risen flesh of Christ, "living bread" (6:51) — God's own life fed to the creature, so that God dwells in us.

true bread

true food

abide in me

medicine of immortality

divinization

Take It Deeper

-  **Apologetics** — see "Why not just symbolic?" above (John 6:52–66; 1 Cor 11:27–29; CCC 1374).
-  **Practice** — one Mass this week with fresh eyes; ten minutes before the tabernacle.

Talk It Over

- Where are you in John 6 — the crowd, the disciples who leave, or Peter who stays?
- "To whom shall we go?" What keeps you with Christ when a teaching is hard?
- How might you receive Communion differently if "true food" is literally true?

My Notes

Before Next Week

- No class **Sep 8**.
- **Sep 15** — "I AM": the Good Shepherd, the man born blind, Lazarus (John 8–11). • School Auditorium.
- Pre-read John 6 once more, slowly.