

Sunday 18th August 2024 Trinity 12. Benefice Holy
Communion Gilling

“How are you?” It’s a common question, one we ask and are asked every day. Most of us have these kinds of conversations several times each day. We offer the usual answers You and I both know the standard answers; “Fine.”, “I’m doing well.”, “I’m good.”

Sometimes we add something about our family, our health, where we have been, or what we have been doing. It’s all about doing; the circumstances of life, getting our work done, meeting deadlines and commitments, fulfilling obligations, volunteering our time, and loving and caring for our families, going to Church. But there is a difference, a vast difference, between doing life and having life, life within us. Do we do life, or do we have life? That’s the issue Jesus is concerned about and the question behind today’s gospel is, ‘Is there life within you?’

That’s a hard question and one which many will avoid or ignore. They will turn back and walk away rather than face the question. Replying with, “Fine,” “busy,” “good,” and “doing well” do not answer the question. They cover it up. Jesus is talking about more than just physical or biological life. He’s talking about that life that is beyond words, indescribable. We get a taste of it when we love so deeply and profoundly that even when everything about us dies, we are more fully alive than ever before, when everything seems to fit together perfectly, and all is right with the world; not because we got our way but because we knew we are a part of something larger, more beautiful, and more holy than anything we could have done. There are moments when time stands still, and we wish the moment would never end. In that moment we are in the flow, the wonder, and the unity of life, and it tastes good, we are satisfied and fulfilled on the inside. So why do we run

away? Why don't we just take that sense fully on board and live it?

We don't because we spend most of our time, energy, and prayer trying to create and possess the life we want and no matter how much we may try, we will feel less than fully alive. Sometimes how we appear on the outside and what we are experiencing on the inside doesn't match up. We ask ourselves, "What am I doing with my life?", wonder if this is all there will ever be and is this as good as it gets? We lament at what has become of us and our life. Nothing seems to satisfy. We despair at what is and what we think will be and we can find no place in which we really belong.

Those questions and feelings are not so much a judgement on us, but a diagnosis of us. They are symptoms that there is no life in us. We are dying from the inside out. There is, however, treatment for our condition and food for our hunger. The flesh and blood of Christ are the medicine that saves; what St. Ignatius called "the medicine of immortality." Jesus is our life and the means to the life for which we most deeply hunger. Wherever human hunger and the flesh and blood of Christ meet, there is life.

Today he says, "Very truly, I tell you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you.", or in other words, "Eat me and drink me, this is the only way you will ever have life within you.". Jesus is very clear and blunt about it. His flesh is true food, and his blood is true drink, and any other diet leaves us empty and hollow, hungry, and bereft of what gives us life. Those are ominous words, that can haunt us and challenge us to consider whether there is life within us and what we most desire to satisfy and fulfil us. This life comes to us as a gift from the Holy Spirit and is made present in our Holy Communion, in our worship and our prayer. It is where we

find the holy relationship and sense of discipleship with Him

By eating and drinking Christ's flesh and blood he lives in us, and we live in Him, not just as individuals but as God's holy family. We consume his life that he might consume and change ours. We eat and digest his life, his love, his mercy, his forgiveness, his way of being and seeing, his compassion, his presence, and his relationship with the Father. That is the life that is given to us and what we must reveal to the world.

As you come for Holy Communion today, eat and drink your way to that life and leave nothing of yourself behind.

Thanks be to God. Amen.