



Meanwhile the Jews were complaining to each other about him, because he had said, 'I am the bread that has come down from heaven.' They were saying, 'Surely this is Jesus son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know. How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven?"'
Jesus said in reply to them,

*'Stop complaining to each other.
'No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me,
and I will raise that person up on the last day.
It is written in the prophets: They will all be taught by God;
everyone who has listened to the Father, and learnt from him, comes to me.
Not that anybody has seen the Father,
except him who has his being from God: he has seen the Father.
In all truth I tell you, everyone who believes has eternal life.
I am the bread of life.
Your fathers ate manna in the desert and they are dead;
but this is the bread which comes down from heaven,
so that a person may eat it and not die.
I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.'*

John 6:41-51

'Surely this is Jesus son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know.'

Monday 2nd week in Lent

John now brings 'the Jews' into the argument. The passage probably reflects fierce arguments that had taken place in the synagogues while the Christians were still members, as in John's community they may well have been until late in the century. The fundamental argument of the Jews is that Jesus was just a man. Any talk of the eucharist as being the living presence of Jesus was rubbish.

John in effect writes off the objection on the grounds that they are spiritually blind. They are blind because they have not had their eyes and mind opened by God. If they had, they would see clearly and what they saw would tell them that in the eucharistic bread they were taking into themselves the life of the being of Jesus, the Jesus who is completely one with God the Father.

It is one of the great tragedies of Christian history that the sublimity of John's vision has led to bitter divisions, conflicts and persecutions over the centuries and still stands sentinel over gates that keep Christians apart.