

**Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis**  
**The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, June 13-14, 2020, Cycle A**

In our first reading from the Old Testament Book of Deuteronomy, we hear an account of how God nourished the ancient Israelites on their 40-year sojourn in the desert with that strange food they called manna. In pointing out to those ancient Israelites how much God cared for them by providing this manna, Moses makes an interesting claim. Moses says: God "let you be afflicted with hunger and then fed you with manna... in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God."

Moses seems to be making a rather strange assertion for why God provided the Israelites manna from heaven. If one does not live by bread alone, then why are these ancient Israelites being provided with this strange physical food as nourishment for their physical bodies?

Well, the point Moses is trying to get across is that we need physical food to nourish our bodies but we have this manna, because we called upon God in prayer. It was by the word that came forth from God's mouth that we have this manna. Spiritual nourishment is what will really sustain our desert journey. Moses is saying – Our relationship with God – living on God's Word.

The Eucharist Jesus provides for us is much like God sustaining the ancient Israelites with manna. The Eucharist is our manna! Our manna that sustains us as God's people as we journey toward that ultimate promised land – the Kingdom of God. The Eucharist is the ultimate statement from God that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Jesus is the ultimate Word that comes forth from God's mouth. If we live in Jesus, The Word of God, then we will have eternal life. The Eucharist is true spiritual nourishment, transcending by far the spiritual nourishment of the ancient manna in the desert.

Jesus says in John's Gospel: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread lives forever." "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood true drink."

Thus, we hear Paul the Apostle reminding the early Corinthian Christian community: The Cup of Blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

Truly the bread and wine of the Eucharist are a participation in Jesus, the Ultimate Word of God. Receiving Jesus the Word in the Eucharist, we are truly living by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.