

Eating Words

Sometimes we hear of people being forced to eat their words when something they claimed to be true turned out to be false. In a different kind of way, some of the prophets in the Old Testament were asked by God to eat his words, to literally take a scroll of the bible and eat it so that God's word would go down into their stomach and become part of their very being. This was so that they could speak God's word to others with utter conviction.

The prophet Elisha was one of the greatest prophets who spoke God's word with utter conviction. And what was this word that he and the other prophets were compelled by God to share with the his people? It was this: God saw that the human race whom he loved with a love beyond measure, was lost in sin and had turned away from their God and the life he so longed to give them. So he sent prophets to tell the people to turn away from sin and idolatry and return to the one true God who loved them and wanted to give them life, since the wages of sin was death.

However good the prophets were, however, and Elisha was truly great prophet, the people wouldn't listen, so, in the fullness of time God made his word into flesh in the person of Jesus Christ so that his word, his message of love and life for his people should be lived out, modelled by a human being so that people could see what living how God wanted them to live by believing in and following Jesus. *'God loved the world so much that he sent his only Son so that everyone who believed in him should not be lost but should have eternal life'*.

Jesus is God's word made flesh. His word brings us life. Peter said, *"Lord, your words are spirit and they are life, you have the message of eternal life"*. So it makes sense that we should listen to the words of Jesus because they are life-giving, but today, with the feeding of the five thousand and the teaching that Jesus gives after it make it clear that Jesus is taking his message to a new level. He will be inviting his followers and us to eat him, to eat his flesh and drink his blood so that his life may be in us now and forever. Once again, like those ancient prophets, we will be eating God's word because we are eating the body of the word made flesh and drinking his blood so that we may have his life in us and live it with true conviction.

Only here in the Mass are we fed with the Word of God inspired in the scriptures and with the Word of God made flesh and blood in Jesus Christ. Eat and drink to your heart's content.