

Take-Home 6: The Manna of the Messiah

What We Found

Reading John 6 a second time, we found what first-pass eyes miss. The whole discourse happens as the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand (John 6:4), by John's own sequence of feasts about a year before the Last Supper. The crowd challenged Jesus with the manna, just as the new-Moses hope of the Scriptures would lead us to expect, and he answered by claiming to be the true bread from heaven, given by the Father, come down to give life to the world.

Then he chose his own point of contrast with the manna, and it was death: your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died; he who eats this bread will live for ever (John 6:49-51, 58). And the manna thread runs past the wilderness all the way to glory: to him who conquers, the risen Christ promises the hidden manna (Revelation 2:17).

Voices of the Church

St. Ignatius of Antioch (d. c. 107)

On the road to martyrdom: I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ (*Letter to the Romans* 7). For the generation after the apostles, the bread of God had a name and a body.

St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444)

In summary of his commentary on John: the Word, being life by nature, made his flesh life-giving by making it his own; when we eat that flesh we take his life into ourselves, and the body once dead in Adam is quickened for resurrection.

St. Carlo Acutis (1991-2006)

An Italian teenager who catalogued Eucharistic miracles online and was canonized in 2025, Carlo summed up John 6 in the sentence he lived by: the Eucharist is my highway to heaven. Another saying widely attributed to him calls the tabernacle the most visited place on earth, because heaven's bread is there.

Live It This Week

- Reread John 6 in one sitting as a second-pass reader, and write down the single verse that hit differently than it did in Session 1.
- Arrive ten minutes early to Mass this Sunday and spend them before the tabernacle with Carlo's sentence in mind: heaven's bread is here.
- Memorize the memory verse well enough to say it with your eyes closed.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever... John 6:51

Before Next Session

Read Psalm 23 slowly, twice, and sit with one line: thou preparest a table before me.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 1336, 1338, 1406, 1524.