A churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

"I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today![[1]](#endnote-1)

Jesus, God in the flesh, feeds us with bread and wine that is so abundant it, like the feeding of the 5,000, satisfies us and has more to spare. We feed on that unending bread and wine at Table Fellowship every Sunday – because through the bread and wine of the Eucharist, Jesus comes to indwell with us. Without that bread, we are spiritual dead. With that bread, we have a spiritually rich life. With that bread we have life eternal, not just temporary satisfaction, as the Israelites did with manna. Although folks ate manna and were satisfied, they ultimately died. But the bread of Jesus -- the flesh of Jesus -- lasts eternally.

In this Gospel passage when Jesus talks about his flesh and eating his flesh, he uses the Greek word sarx for flesh. The use of the word “sarx” refers back to the very first sentences in the Gospel of John because it is the same word used to describe the Word made flesh. It’s the same word used in the passage that starts with: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” and continues with He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A1-16&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26046c)] and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A1-16&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26049d)] full of grace and truth.” The word “sarx” is the Chosen form into which the Word was poured into.

So when we come to the Eucharistic Table, we become filled with that very same Word, God becomes indwelled in us and we become indwelled in God. Through the bread that we eat, we also abide in a community – this local community and the worldwide community of the baptized -- whose life is determined by the living and dying of Jesus. Thus we share in his future of eternal life as well as a new quality of life in the present.

[J.T. will be baptized into this community in just a few minutes. His life will become determined by the living and dying of Jesus and He will share in this future of eternal life as well as a new quality of life in Jesus.]

The website Sacraconversazione.org describes the Word Made Flesh and our feeding on this flesh in this way.

John’s evangel is that the love of God is now “in the flesh.” And it is so vivid, so unforgettable; its memory, its image so powerful it “touches” our flesh and we “respond.” In and through Jesus, the Christ, we have gotten a “taste” of God’s love for us. It is so strong we can virtually taste it on our lips as we “ingest” the “body and blood” and we swallow the Word. We know it is real when it heals leftover hurt and pain we thought would never go away; when hungers we never thought could be filled are met and exceeded. And once we have developed a “taste” for it, we cannot get enough: This is my body/this is my blood/eat, drink and live forever! Excess, extravagance beyond “belief” is the point of the feeding of so many thousands from so little. This event provides the “proof” beyond argument or reason of God’s initiative to meet and exceed our deepest longings and passions. The first offering from God was “wisdom” in all her beguiling and gracious “hospitality”; the second is the Christ, God in the “flesh” that feeds and nurtures, satisfying our basic needs so completely we can “taste” it.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Come to the Table today. Come as often as you can. Taste and See that the Lord is good. Taste and let that goodness dwell in you.

Amen

1. *Anonymous Internet circulation; submitted by Michael Herman, Glen Ellyn, Illinois and found on Preachingtoday.com* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Sacraconversazione.org (6/8/2015), Found in Synthesis. A Weekly Resource for Preaching and Worship in the Episcopal Tradition, PNMSI Publishing Co., Inc**.** [↑](#endnote-ref-2)