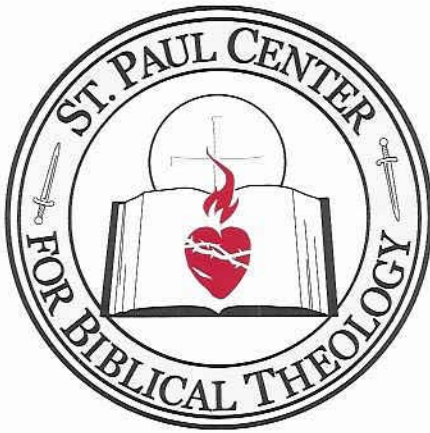


Breaking the Bread

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*Reading the Bible from
The Heart of the Church*

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'You Have the Words of Eternal Life'

Dr. Scott Hahn

Peter personifies Lent for me.

I'm thinking of that scene in the synagogue at Capernaum (see John 6:22-69).

Jesus' teaching about the Eucharist had caused even many of His disciples to begin murmuring against Him. They were outraged that Jesus would call His flesh "true food" and His blood "true drink." Many were so offended they "returned to their former way of life," the Gospel tells us.



Not Peter. Jesus gave him the option, but Peter spoke boldly for the Twelve: "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Peter's example is so important. We all know people who have left the Church because of some hard teaching or because they've been scandalized by some injustice. Whatever the cause, people can always find excuses to murmur, to let their love die, to stop following Jesus. Maybe we've been tempted this way, too.

Peter teaches us the obedience of faith—even when we can't believe what's happening; even when we're asked to believe something that's beyond our natural powers of comprehension.

We're always tempted to want to

understand first and then decide whether to believe. But the Bible teaches that obedience is what leads to understanding. And obedience begins where Peter did—with faith that Jesus alone holds the words of eternal life.

Remember when he first met Jesus? He'd been fishing all night with no luck and Jesus came along telling him to put out into the deep and try again. Peter was a professional fisherman. He knew the fish just weren't going to be biting that day. But he trusted in the Lord and did as he was told anyway.

And his obedience enabled him to see the Lord in his midst and to fall at His knees in adoration and repentance.

Peter personifies Lent for me because Lent is the season when we recall that our Christian life is meant to be one of ongoing and ever-deepening conversion. That continuing conversion means what Peter described: allowing ourselves to be purified daily by obedience to the truth of His Word (see 1 Peter 1:22).

At the St. Paul Center we're trying to help Catholics in their daily conversion to our Lord. We want them to hear the words of eternal life as they still come to us in the Scriptures and in the true food and drink of the Liturgy.

We can only hear His words surely if we stay close to Him in the Eucharist and remain united to Peter's successor, the vicar of Christ. To whom else shall we go? He alone has the words of eternal life. And we have come to believe.