Grace, mercy and peace to you in the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dearly Beloved,

From all eternity and for ever the LORD God Almighty - Father, Son, Holy Ghost - is in His heaven. From the Bible we perceive that heaven is up, up there somewhere. For a time and until eternity mankind - man, woman, child - is on this earth. From this experience we perceive that we are not in heaven, but rather we are down here and heading even farther down. For a while and not for ever ... you today, are down here. God in heaven, up there. You today, down here. Unless history ends in your lifetime, it won't remain that way forever, for it is most certainly true that you, on a certain tomorrow, will lie down and be unable, for one reason or another, to arise. And if you are not able to raise yourself up even six feet in order to stand upon this earth, is there any hope to be with God in His heaven ... up there ... some day?

Left up to you and to me, the answer is "no." Even if we assemble all our resources, and exert the greatest exercise of our wills, and think only positive thoughts, and speak a million nice words, and do goodeeds to the max, that answer is a resounding, "no." Even if we sling-shot a crew up into the air and beyond the atmosphere of the earth, the rocket shot falls far short of God's heaven. We are all too painfully aware of the deadly, downward plunge of rockets and the Fall of man. Our best efforts land miserably short of the mark, and left to ourselves, the aspiration to be with God in His heaven ... up there ... some day ... is infinitely beyond us.

No one is able to ascend to God. You know it. I know it. In addition, we are, everyday, being convinced of it. Therefore, if you or I, or anyone else for that matter, is going to be with God in His heaven, then He must come down and make it so. Does God want you to be with Him in heaven? Does God want to come down and make this happen for all people and thus, make it happen for you? Dearly beloved, the answer to that question is in the Gospel Reading for this day. Please listen to John 6:51-58 again and ponder ...

... "Jesus - The Living Bread from Heaven."

"I am the Living Bread - the One coming down from heaven; if anyone eats of this Bread he will live forever, and the Bread which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.’ Therefore the Jews disputed among themselves saying, 'How is this man able to give his flesh to eat?' Therefore Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you have no life in you. The one who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal Life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My Flesh is true food; and My Blood is true drink. The one who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood abides in Me and I in him. Just as the Living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who eats Me will live because of Me. This
is the Bread coming down out of heaven - not like as the fathers ate and died; the one eating this Bread will live forever.'"

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

This is Jesus speaking and in His Word and in His words there is the Good News that is intended for all to hear and believe and have. Not one of us alone and not all of us together could ascend to be with God. The Lord knew this from eternity and willed the plan of your salvation and the salvation of the world from before its foundations were cast forth by the Word. He must come to us and He must bring us to Him in heaven. This is the plan determined in the eternal council of God: the Son would be the One Who came down to be the Savior of the world. It would not be the Father; it would not be the Holy Spirit. Your Redeemer would be the Son.

The minds of man have conjured a god or the gods which have come down into this world. The mythical gods of Greece and Rome came down to stir up trouble, to mettle in the affairs of man, and to engage in competitions and sport with one another wherein people are pawns on a syncretistic chessboard. Indeed, this is what we are left with when we depart from the truth. The flight from the truth is always in the direction of myth.

But the Good News of the Son coming down to us is not myth. Rather, the Gospel is dogma ... doctrine ... truth that the Son of God came down from heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was made man. This in-fleshed God was conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of the Virgin Mary and was circumcised on the eighth day. Behold Jehovah's Flesh and Blood, given and shed for you! On that day He was named Jesus, which means "savior."

In time, at about 30 years of age, Jesus, the eternal Son of God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also the Son of Man, taught in a synagogue in Capernaum, saying to those assembled in His Presence, "I am the Living Bread - the One coming down from heaven; if anyone eats of this Bread he will live forever, and the Bread which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

There you have it from the mouth of your Savior. Jesus is heaven sent and He is come down to give Himself for the life of the world. Jesus the Christ will die in order for the world to have life. This Living Bread come down from heaven will give His flesh to the whip so that by the stripes laying open His back, wounds caused by the world's lashes, you are healed. This Divine Wine will be poured out from the wounds of the crucified Christ as He is hung out to dry on the cross. In that sacred Blood, shed for the sins of the world, the Perfect payment for your sinfulness and for all your sins is found.

Amazing. "Therefore the Jews disputed among themselves saying, 'How is this man able to give his flesh to eat?'" It is a question of reason, and in it, there are two assumptions - one definitely wrong and one in the direction of what was right. First, they assumed that Jesus was only a man. He appeared no different than any other man. His hands had the same calluses as any other carpenter who swung a hammer and drove a spike. His brow bore beads of sweat as any man of Galilee who swabbed his forehead with a sleeve. His feet bore the same dirt of the earth as any man, woman or child who walked in the dusty way of this fallen land and He hurt as any who stepped on a thorn or a nail. Those who disputed among themselves looked with their eyes instead of hearing the Word of truth with their ears. Jesus is truly man; He is also truly God. They got it wrong and they, like so many today, imagine a different Jesus, one who is only human. But Jesus is Jehovah.
"How is this man able to give his flesh to eat?" The second assumption is leading in the right direction. "Look, in order for anyone to eat his flesh, he will have to die and the only way is through him being a sacrifice. What's he going to do, sacrifice himself? For unless that takes place, "How is this man able to give his flesh to eat?" This Sacrifice is exactly the reason why the Son of God left heaven itself and became man - to be the sufficient Sacrifice for all people of all times of all places of all ages ... including you. There on the cross is the Savior Who sacrificed Himself in your place as the hand of a Roman hammer drove nails into God's hands, and the Sacred Head of the Divine bled with the crown of thorns plaited by the hands of malicious man, and the feet of the Almighty were pinned to wooden post. Here is the Sacrifice of the ages as the Son of God, posted from above, gives His Flesh unto the Feast, His Blood for the Cup of Salvation, and His Life for the world.

"Therefore Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you have no life in you.' So the escalated question is, "How is the Lord able to give his flesh to eat?" The answer? The Word. God's Word. God grants us such a Feast according to His Word. For, according to God's Word of Promise, those who abide in the Living Son, abide also in the Living Father, or as Jesus said it, "Just as the Living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who eats Me will live because of Me."

Anyone who believes and trusts in the "Word become flesh and dwelling among us" (John 1:14) has eternal life, for that is the very reason why the Living Bread is come down from heaven. Behold, dearly beloved, "Christ, our Paschal Lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7) and, yet He is not dead. He is risen as He said. On Good Friday the In-fleshed Son of God died; on the third day, that is, on Easter Sunday, Jesus rose again from the dead. Thus, "when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). Therefore, listen to the Savior speak such wonderful news for those who trust in Him, "The one who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal Life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Another way of saying this came from the risen Redeemer's mouth when He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Or even as the Bible states via the pen of the Apostle Paul, "do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by Baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a Resurrection like His" (Romans 6:3-5).

Jesus said, "For My Flesh is true food; and My Blood is true drink. The one who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood abides in Me and I in him." As we continue to abide in Christ, "we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Abiding in Christ means trusting in the Savior. Eating the Flesh of Jesus and drinking His Blood is feasting in His Presence. This means continuing to believe in this Good News of the Living Bread come down from heaven. It means continual living in that forgiveness that He wrought for you and hearing that you are forgiven of all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

"This is the Bread coming down out of heaven - not like as the fathers ate and died; the one eating this Bread will live forever." Amen.