

Tuesday of the Third Week of Easter

Gospel text (Jn 6:30-35): So they said to him, “What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” So Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” So they said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.

«My Father gives you the true bread from heaven»

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Today in Jesus' words we can verify the confronts and the complementarity between the Old and the New Testaments: the Old Testament was an expectation of the New Testament and in the New Testament, God's promises to the fathers of the Old Testament are being fulfilled. Thus, the manna the Israelis ate in the desert was not the authentic bread from Heaven, but an anticipated image of the true bread that God, our Father, has given us in the person of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent to us as Saviour of the world. Moses begs for God to give the Israelis physical food; Jesus Christ, instead, has given Himself for us as that divine aliment yielding life.

“What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do?” (Jn 6:30), the Jews ask unbelieving and irreverent. Do they perhaps consider meaningless the sign of the multiplication of the bread and fish Jesus had accomplished the previous day? Why did they want yesterday to proclaim Jesus as a king while today they do not want to believe him anymore? How often can the human heart change! St. Bernard of Clairvaux said: “It is so that these impious ones wander in a circle, longing after something to gratify their yearnings, yet madly rejecting that which alone can bring them to their desired end, not by

exhaustion but by attainment.” And so it happened that those Jews, engulfed by a materialistic vision, expected someone who would nourish them and would solve all their problems, but they did not want to believe; this is all they desired out of Jesus. Is not this the idea of he who is only interested in a comfortable religion, tailor-made and without any commitment?

“Sir, give us this bread always.” (Jn 6:34): I wish I could say these words, pronounced by the Jews from their materialistic look at life, with the sincerity faith provides us with; that that these words truly mean a desire to nurture myself with Jesus Christ and to live closely united to Him forever.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“In the New Testament there is Bread of heaven, and a Cup of salvation, sanctifying soul and body; for as the Bread corresponds to our body, so is the Word appropriate to our soul.” (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem)

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“But man hungers for more than the Manna in the desert. As the audience still does not understand, Jesus repeats himself even more unambiguously: ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst’ (Jn 6:35).” (Benedict XVI)

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“The flood and Noah's ark prefigured salvation by Baptism, as did the cloud and the crossing of the Red Sea. Water from the rock was the figure of the spiritual gifts of Christ, and manna in the desert prefigured the Eucharist, ‘the true bread from heaven’ (Jn 6:32).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 1094)