

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Gospel text (Jn 6,51-58): Jesus said to the crowd: «I am the living bread which has come from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever. The bread I shall give is my flesh and I will give it for the life of the world». The Jews were arguing among themselves, «How can this man give us flesh to eat?». So Jesus replied, «Truly, I say to you, if you do not 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 live with eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day. My flesh is really food and my blood is drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood, live in me and I in them. Just as the Father, who is life, sent me and I have life from the Father, so whoever eats me will have life from me. This is the bread which came from heaven; unlike that of your ancestors, who ate and later died. Those who eat this bread will live forever».

«I am the living bread which has come from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever»

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Today, we persevere in the interpretation of the Discourse of the Living Bread that we have been commenting these last Sundays: «I am the living bread which has come from heaven» (Jn 6:51). It has a very well thought-out, and even literary, structure, full of valuable teachings. How wonderful it would be if we, Christians, could have a better knowledge of the Scriptures! We would discover the very Mystery of God that we receive as the true food of our souls, which, more often than not, are drowsy and craving for eternal life. This Living Word is really marvelous, the only Scripture that can actually change our hearts.

Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, speaks of himself by saying He is the Bread of Life. And, as we know quite well, the bread is to be eaten. But to eat —we should not forget— we must be hungry. How can we actually understand

what being a Christian really means, if we have lost our hunger for God? Hunger to know Him, hunger to regard Him as a good Friend, hunger to make Him known to all, hunger to share Him, as we share our bread at the table. What a beautiful picture to see the head of the family slicing his daily bread earned by the sweat of his brow, while sharing it copiously with his sons! Now, however, it is the very Jesus who is offering himself as the Living Bread, and it is Himself who sets up the measure, and who gives Himself away to us, with an overflowing magnanimity that makes us shudder with emotion.

Bread of Life..., of what Life? It is quite clear that it will not allow us to live down here any longer than we should; though it may indeed change the quality and depth of every instant we live here. Let us honestly ask ourselves: —What life do I want for me? And let us compare it with what our present life really is. Is this what you expected? Don't you think your horizon can widen much more? Then, look: much more than you and I together could ever imagine... much fuller... much more beautiful... much more... is the Life of Christ that throbs and pulsates in the Eucharist. And He is there, expecting us to eat Him, waiting at the door to our heart, patient, passionate, for He knows how to love. And, after that, the eternal Life: «Whoever eats of this bread will live forever» (Jn 6:58). —What else do you want?