Monday of the Third Week of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 6:22-29): After Jesus had fed the five thousand men, his disciples saw him walking on the sea. The next day, the crowd that remained across the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not gone along with his disciples in the boat, but only his disciples had left. Other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they had eaten the bread when the Lord gave thanks. When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

And when they found him across the sea they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered them and said, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal.” So they said to him, “What can we do to accomplish the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.”

“Work… for the food that endures for eternal life”

Abbé Jacques FORTIN
(Alma (Quebec), Canada)

Today, after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, the people went looking for Jesus as far as Capernaum. Then as now, people are seeking the divine. Isn't the proliferation of religious sects and esotericism proof of this thirst for all things divine?

However, some people would like to adapt this divinity to their own needs. History tells us that sometimes, there have been attempts to use the divine for political or other purposes. Today the crowd went looking for Jesus. Why? It is the question that Jesus asks when he says: “Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled” (Jn 6:26). Jesus was not fooled. He knows that they were not able to read the signs for the multiplication of the loaves. He announced that what nourishes man is a spiritual food which gives us eternal life (cf. Jn 6:27). God is the one who gives us this food and He gives it to us through His Son. Anything that increases our faith in Him is the kind of food in which we should invest all our energies.

We understand why the Pope encourages us to work on a re-evangelization of our world, which often does not come to God for the good reasons. The Fathers of the Vatican Council II, in the constitution "Gaudium et Spes" ("The Church in the Modern World") remind us that: “The Church truly knows that only God, Whom she serves, meets the deepest longings of the human heart, which is never fully satisfied by what this world has to offer.” And why do we continue to follow Jesus? What does the church bring to us? We must remember what Vatican Council II tells us! Are we convinced that the well-being this nourishment provides can be given to the world?

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Holy Communion is for us the pledge of eternal life so that it guarantees Heaven to us. It is a pledge sent from Heaven to tell us that it will one day be our dwelling place.” (Saint John Vianney)

- “The miraculously multiplied bread harks back to the miracle of manna in the desert and at the same time points beyond itself: to the fact that man’s real food is the Logos, the eternal Word, the eternal meaning, from which we come and toward which our life is directed.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Jesus does not reveal the Holy Spirit fully, until he himself has been glorified through his Death and Resurrection. Nevertheless, little by little he alludes to him even in his teaching of the multitudes, as when he reveals that his own flesh will be food for the life of the world.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 728)

Other comments

“This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.”

Fr. Josep GASSÓ i Lécera
(Ripollet, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we contemplate the result of the multiplication of the breads, a result that astounded that entire crowd. The next day they descend from the mountain to reach the lakeshore, and remain there looking at Capernaum. They stay there because there is no boat. In fact, there had been only one: the boat the previous afternoon had gone without Jesus.

The question is: Where is Jesus? The disciples have sailed without Jesus, and Jesus is certainly not there. Where is He, then? Luckily enough, the crowd can get into some other boats that have come, and leave for Capernaum, to look for Jesus.

And, sure enough, when they arrive to the other side of the lake, they find Him. They are surprised to find

Him there, and they ask Him: “Rabbi, when did you get here?” (Jn 6:25). These people do not know that Jesus, miraculously, has walked on the waters, and Jesus does not directly answer to the questions they ask Him, either.

What awareness and what endeavor bring them to truly find Jesus? The Lord tells us: “Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal.” (Jn 6:27).

Behind all this, a sign of divine generosity, the multiplication of the breads continues being present. People insist and keep asking: “What can we do to accomplish the works of God?” (Jn 6:28). Jesus clearly replies: “This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.” (Jn 6:29).

Jesus does not ask us to multiply our good deeds, but to have faith in the One whom God Father has sent. Because with faith, man carries out the work of God. This is why He has established the same faith as work. The Virgin Mary provides us with the best model of unconditional love manifested in faith works.