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"

Fr. Joaquim MESEGUER García
(Rubí, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, in the words of Jesus, we can see the contrast and complementarity between the Old and New Testaments: the Old Testament is a foreshadowing of the New, and in the New Testament, the promises God made to the patriarchs in the Old Testament reach their fulfillment. Thus, the manna the Israelites ate in the desert was not the true bread from heaven, but a foreshadowing of the true bread that God, our Father, has given us in the person of Jesus Christ, whom he sent as Savior of the world. Moses asked God for material food for the Israelites; Jesus Christ, on the other hand, gives himself as the divine food that gives life.

“What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do?” (John 6:30), the unbelieving and impertinent Jews demand. Did the sign of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes performed by Jesus the day before seem insignificant to them? Why did they want to proclaim Jesus king yesterday, and why do they no longer believe him today? How fickle the human heart often is! Saint Bernard of Clairvaux says: “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.” This was the case with the Jews: immersed in a materialistic worldview, they expected someone to feed them and solve their problems, but they didn't want to believe; that was all that interested them about Jesus. Isn't this the perspective of someone who desires a comfortable, tailor-made religion without commitment?

“Sir, give us this bread always” (Jn 6:34): may these words, spoken by the Jews from their materialistic perspective, be spoken by me with the sincerity that faith provides; may they truly express a desire to be

nourished by Jesus Christ and to live united to Him forever.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “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)

- “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)

- “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, Nº 1094)