Wednesday of the Third Week of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 6:35-40): Jesus said to the crowds, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst. But I told you that although you have seen me, you do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day.”

”Whoever comes to me will never hunger”

Fr. Gavan JENNINGS
(Dublín, Ireland)

Today we see how much our hunger and our thirst concern God! How can we continue to think that God is indifferent to our sufferings? And yet, so often, we “refuse to believe” in the tender love that God has for each one of us. In hiding Himself in the Eucharist, God manifests the incredible lengths He will go to in order to satiate our thirst and our hunger.

But what thirst and hunger are these? Ultimately it is the hunger and thirst for “eternal life”. Physical hunger and thirst is only a pale reflection of a deep desire each man has for a divine life that only Christ can give us. “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life” (Jn 6:39). And what must we do to obtain this eternal life we so desire? Some heroic, superhuman feat? No, it is something much simpler for Jesus says: “I will not reject anyone who comes to me” (Jn 6:37). We simply have to show up – to come to Him.

These words of Christ spur us to come to Him daily in Mass. This is the easiest thing in the world: simply to show up at Mass, pray and then receive His body. Once we do this, we not only possess this new life, but we radiate it to others. Pope Francis, the then Cardinal Bergoglio, said in a Corpus Christi homily: “How beautiful it is, after receiving Holy Communion, to think of our lives as a prolonged Mass in which we bring the fruit of the presence of the Lord to the world of families, to the housing estates, to our study and work; thus we will also come to think of our life as a daily preparation for the Eucharist, in which the Lord takes everything that is ours and offers it once again to the Father.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Do unto me, Lord, whatever’s Your pleasure. I’ll lodge no conditions nor reservations, for You are my joy, my soul’s greatest treasure. To you I pour out my heart intimations.” (Saint Faustina Kowalska)

- “Only the one who is God sees God—Jesus. He truly speaks from his vision of the Father, from unceasing dialogue with the Father, a dialogue that is his life.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The Son of God, who came down ‘from heaven, not to do (his) own will, but the will of him who sent (him)’ (Jn 6:38) said on coming into the world, ‘Lo, I have come to do your will, O God’. ‘And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all’.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 606)

Other comments

“This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life”

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

Today Jesus reveals Himself as the bread of life. At first sight, the definition He makes of Himself is rather curious and paradoxical; but, when we dig into it a little further, we realize that with these words the meaning of His mission is clearly stated: to save man and give him a new life. “And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it [on] the last day.” (Jn 6:39). This is why, to perpetuate His saving act of giving Himself for us and His presence among us, Jesus Christ has become spiritual aliment for us.

God makes it possible for us to believe in Jesus Christ and get close to Him: “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me” (Jn 6:37-38). Therefore, with our faith, let us get close to Him who has decided to be our nourishment, our light and our life for, as Ignatius of Antioch affirms “faith is the principle of true life.”

Jesus Christ invites us to follow Him, to nourish ourselves through Him, for this is what it means to see Him and believe in Him. At the same time, He shows us how to abide by His Father's will, just as He does. When teaching his disciples the prayer of the sons of God, the Lord's Prayer, He put together these two petitions: “Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today the bread that we need.” This refers not only to the material bread, but also to Himself, as the bread of eternal life whom, day after day, we have to remain very close to with the profound cohesion the Holy Spirit provides.