

Thursday of the Third Week of Easter

Gospel text (Jn 6:44-51): Jesus said to the crowds: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world.”

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven”

Fr. Pere MONTAGUT i Piquet
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we sing to the Lord from whom we receive the glory and the triumph. The Risen Lord presents Himself to His Church with that “I am whom I am” that identifies Him as a source of salvation: “I am the bread of life” (Jn 6:48). The community gathered around Him who is Alive, by way of thanks, lovingly recognizes Him and accepts God's instruction, now known as the Father's teachings. Christ, immortal and glorious, reminds us again that the Father is the true protagonist of everything. Those who listen and believe live in communion with Him who comes from God, with the only one who has seen Him and, thus, faith is the very beginning of eternal life.

The living bread is Jesus. It is not nourishment we assimilate for us but that assimilates us. It makes us feel hungry for God, thirsty for listening to His Word, which is, our heart's rejoicing and joy. The Eucharist is an anticipation of the heavenly glory: “We divide the bread, the medicine of immortality, the antidote we

take in order not to die but to live forever in Jesus Christ” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch). Our communion with the flesh of Christ risen must get us accustomed to all that comes down from Heaven, that is, to beg, receive and assume our true condition: we are made for God and only He can fully satisfy our hunger.

But this living bread will not only one day make us live beyond our physical death, but we receive it now “for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). The Father's design, who did not create us to die, is tied to love and faith. He demands a present, free and personal reply to His initiative. Each time we eat from that bread, let us go deeper into the very Love! We do not live anymore for ourselves; we do not live anymore in error. The world is precious because there is He who keeps on loving to the end, because there is a Sacrifice out of which we all benefit, even those who ignore it.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

-

“For naught else is brought about by the partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ than that we pass into that which we then take, and both in spirit and in body carry everywhere Him, in and with Whom we were dead, buried, and rose again.” (Saint Leo the Great)

-

“Let us live the Eucharist with the spirit of faith, of prayer, of forgiveness, of repentance, of communal joy, of concern for the needy, in the certainty that the Lord will fulfil what he has promised us: eternal life.” (Francis)

-

“The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’ Second Vatican Council. ‘The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch’ (Second Vatican Council).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 1324)