Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Gospel text (*Jn* 6:51-58): Jesus said to the crowds: "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."

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever"

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today we continue with the reading of the Discourse on the Bread of Life that concerns us these Sundays: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (Jn 6:51). It has a structure, even literary, that is very well thought out and full of rich teachings. How beautiful it would be if we Christians knew Holy Scripture better! We would encounter the same Mystery of God that is given to us as true nourishment for our souls, often drowsy and hungry for eternity. This Living Word is fantastic, the only Scripture capable of changing hearts.

Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, speaks of himself by telling us that he is Bread. And bread, as we well know, is made to be eaten. And to eat - we must remember - we must be hungry. How can we understand what it means, deep down, to be Christian, if we have lost the hunger for God? Hunger to know Him, hunger to treat Him as a good Friend, hunger to make Him known, hunger to share Him, as one shares the bread on the table. What a beautiful image to see the head of the family cutting good bread, which he has previously earned with the effort of his work and giving it in abundance to his children! Now, then, it is Jesus who gives himself as the Bread of Life, and it is He himself who gives the

measure, and who gives himself with a generosity that makes one tremble with emotion.

Bread of Life... of what Life? Clearly it will not lengthen our stay on earth even one day longer; in any case, it will change the quality and depth of each moment of our days. Let us ask ourselves honestly: —And me, what life do I want for myself? And let us compare it with the real orientation with which we live. Is this what you wanted? Don't you think that the horizon can be much broader still? Well, look: much more than anything you and I can imagine together... much fuller... much more beautiful... much more... is the Life of Christ pulsating in the Eucharist. And there it is, waiting to be eaten by us, waiting at the door of your heart, patient, ardent like one who knows how to love. And after this, eternal Life: "Whoever eats this bread will live forever" (Jn 6:58). —What more do you want?

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "If, as often as his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins, I should always receive it, so that it may always forgive my sins. Because I always sin, I should always have a remedy” (Saint Ambrose)

- "The Church and the world have a great need of eucharistic worship. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us be generous by our adoration never cease" (Saint John Paul II)

- "... By celebrating the memorial of his sacrifice, we offer to the Father what he has himself given us: the gifts of his creation, bread and wine... which have become the body and blood of Christ...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 1357)