

Monday's Gospel: Savoring the Eucharist

Gospel for Monday in the 3rd Week of Easter, and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 6:22-29)

On the next day the people who remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. However, boats from Tiberias came near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the people saw that

Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal.”

Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”

Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

Commentary

The previous day, Jesus had fed the crowd following him with bread. Those who benefited from the miracle are now eagerly seeking Jesus. They are looking for him everywhere, and even cross the lake to follow the trail of the one who produced such abundant bread without the slightest effort and gave it to them. They call Jesus Teacher, and deep down they want to proclaim him King, since they think that someone has finally arrived who is going to truly solve all their problems.

Jesus, who knows the depths of human hearts, wants to help his listeners grasp the true meaning of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves: to realize that it is a sign announcing something much

greater. Jesus tells them: “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” But the crowd responds: “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” They don’t realize the full implications of his words.

Perhaps they think that by doing the works God is asking of them, they will receive in exchange bread each day. Our Lord, however, wants to give them something much greater; he wants to give them his own Body as food. But to grasp this, they need more faith: “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

Today's Gospel invites us to ask ourselves if we are diligently seeking the true food that is the Eucharist. It also reminds us that in order to “savor” the Eucharist we need to

approach it with faith. How helpful we can find it, for example, to prepare for these encounters with our Lord through spiritual communions, which enkindle faith in our hearts. Then the reception of the Eucharist will truly transform us; it will enable us to carry out the works of God in our lives, and divinize our daily work.

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