

Thursday's Gospel: Christ, the Way to the Father

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

Gospel (*Jn* 6:44-51)

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who

believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

Commentary

The Gospel according to Saint John has transmitted to us Jesus' words about his relationship with the Father with a clarity not found in the other Gospels. During these days the liturgy is reminding us of his words in the sixth chapter, specifically in the discourse about the Bread of Life. Those following our Lord were

seeking life in Him. And truly Jesus presented himself as the Bread of Life, but of a Life they couldn't even imagine. The food he was offering was not simply for the body.

In today's Gospel passage we are encouraged not to give up in our effort to seek, find and love Jesus (cf. *The Way*, 382). To do so, we need to foster a trusting and grateful readiness to listen, in a dialogue of love. But it needs to be a true listening in which we allow ourselves to be touched in the deepest part of our being, and as a result make our life accord with what we have received. Christ wants to illumine our intellect, strengthen our will and accompany us on the path to the Father. God is the source of Life, and He wants to lead us to that source. How does Jesus do this? By leaving us an example so that we may follow in his footsteps (cf. *1 Pet* 2:21). This is what faith means: identifying

ourselves with the one in whom we believe.

In one of the Easter Vigil readings we are told: *everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food* (Is 55:1-2). How often we have used the word “satisfy” without really knowing what it means to be satisfied! For the prophet is talking about something that fills us and is never lost. That is where we need to invest our effort: in nourishing ourselves on Christ, in turning our entire existence into a dialogue with Him – working with Him, resting with Him, deepening our friendships with his love, longing to see a Father whose face only Christ

has contemplated and that he has shown and shows us to the extent that we let Him live in us.

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