

Daily Reading & Meditation

Lord, Give Us This Bread Always

SUNDAY 1 AUGUST 2021

GOSPEL READING: John 6:24-35

24 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. 25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 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. 27 Do not labour 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." 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." 30 So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform?" 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." 34 They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always." 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.

Meditation: Is there anything in this life that can truly satisfy our deepest hunger and longing? Many sought Jesus out because he offered them something no one else could give - bread from heaven from the very hand of God himself. When Jesus had performed the miracle of multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish to provide a refreshing and satisfying meal for more than 5000 people (see John 6:1-15), they wanted to make him their king - no doubt because they wanted more. When Jesus withdrew from the crowd and quietly returned to Capernaum to be with his twelve disciples, they ran to seek him there (John 6:24-25). **Jesus met them with a probing question - are you looking for physical food that perishes or food that gives eternal life?**

Jesus offers us the bread of heaven which produces spiritual life in us

Do you hunger for the *bread of life*? The Jews had always regarded the manna in the wilderness as the *bread of God* (Psalm 78:24, Exodus 16:15). There was a strong Rabbinic belief that when the Messiah came he would give manna from heaven. This was the supreme work of Moses. Now the Jewish leaders were demanding that Jesus produce manna from heaven as proof to his claim to be the Messiah. Jesus responds by telling them that it was not Moses who gave the manna, but God. And the manna given to Moses and the people was not the real bread from heaven, but only a symbol of the bread to come.

Jesus makes the claim which only God can make: *I am the bread of life*. The bread which Jesus offers is none else than the very life of God. This is the true bread which can truly satisfy the hunger in our hearts. The manna from heaven prefigured the superabundance of the unique bread of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper which Jesus gave to his disciples on the eve of his sacrifice. The manna in the wilderness sustained the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land. It could not produce eternal life for the Israelites.

Only Jesus can satisfy our deepest hunger for everlasting truth, life and love

Jesus' question to the crowd, and to each one of us as well, echoes the words of the prophet Isaiah: "*Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy*" (Isaiah 55:2)? There are two fundamental types of hunger - physical and spiritual. Only the Lord Jesus can

satisfy the deepest hunger in our heart - the hunger for everlasting truth, life, and love. Jesus alone can satisfy our hunger for truth - because in him alone is the Truth which is found in God. Jesus alone can satisfy our hunger for life - because he alone can give us abundant life - the supernatural life of God which transforms us now and lasts forever. Jesus alone can satisfy our deepest hunger for love - the love of God that knows no end, that never fails nor forsakes us, that outlasts sin and death. Jesus alone can satisfy the eternal hunger of our heart, mind, and spirit.

Doing the works of God

Jesus spoke about the *works of God* and what we must do to be doing the *works of God*, namely to *believe in God's Son whom he has sent into the world*. The Lord Jesus offers a new relationship with God which issues in a new kind of life - a life of sacrificial love, selfless service, and the forgiveness of others which corresponds to God's mercy, goodness and loving kindness; a life of holiness, purity, and truth which corresponds to God's holiness; and a life of obedience and trust which corresponds to God's offer of abundant life, peace, and happiness. This is the work which Jesus directs us to and enables us to perform in the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you hunger for the bread which comes down from heaven and thirst for the words of everlasting life?

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *God is our landlord*, by Augustine of Hippo, 354-430 A.D.

"Our wish, you see, is to attain to eternal life. We wish to reach the place where nobody dies, but if possible we do not want to get there via death. We would like to be whisked away there while we are still alive and see our bodies changed, while we are alive, into that spiritual form into which they are to be changed when we rise again. Who wouldn't like that? Isn't it what everybody wants? But while that is what you want, you are told, Quit. Remember what you have sung in the psalm: 'A lodger am I on earth.' If you are a lodger, you are staying in someone else's house; if you are staying in someone else's house, you quit when the landlord bids you. And the landlord is bound to tell you to quit sooner or later, and he has not guaranteed you a long stay. After all, he did not sign a contract with you. Seeing that you are lodging with him for nothing, you quit when he tells you to. And this, too, has to be put up with, and for this, too, patience is very necessary." (excerpt from *Sermon 359A,8*)

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus, you are the true Bread of Heaven. Only you alone can truly satisfy the deepest longing and hunger of my heart. Nourish me with the bread of life that I may be truly satisfied in you alone as the giver of life. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- World and Covet19. Lord, Look upon the victims of Covet19 throughout the world with eyes of mercy, may your healing hands rest upon them, may your life-giving powers flow into every cell of their bodies and into the depths of their souls, cleansing, purifying, restoring them to wholeness and strength for service in your Kingdom. **Amen.**