

## 18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR B HOMILY, 2018

My dear brothers and sisters, today's Gospel reading is the continuation of the **Bread of Life** discourse. Jesus utilizes the symbolism of bread in order to bring out the message he wanted to teach the Jews and all of us. The phrase "**bread of life**" stems from the Jewish belief of the "bread of God" which was another name for the bread of the Presence (Lev.21:6, 8). Hence, Jesus is saying that he is the fulfilment of the bread of Presence under the old covenant. Jesus Christ is far better than the former bread of Presence, because he is the bread that comes from heaven and the bread that promises eternal life. Jesus is taking his time and gradually through dialogue bring the Jews to faith (Jn.6:25-34) that he is the bringer of the messianic gifts. Thus, Christ reveals the mystery of the Eucharist: he is the Bread of Life who gives himself sacramentally as genuine food.

In today's Gospel, we find out that the Jews (the religious leaders) put several questions to Jesus, some out of curiosity, others with a bad intention. Let us examine three of these questions. First, "John 6:25, **Rabbi, when did you come here?**" Jesus did not reply to their question but went right away into what he wanted to tell them. "You would like me to repeat the wonder I worked out yesterday, but I tell you; **do not work for food that perishes but the food that endures for eternal life (Jn.6:27)**. Bodily food gives us life only for a time; no matter how well fed we are; we all will die all the same. Look for spiritual food; food that keeps people truly alive and alive for ever, such is the food I am recommending for you, God's will is that you accept it".

The next question is "John 6:28; **what does God want us to do?**" Apparently, the question shows that they were searching for the truth in sincerity. It soon became obvious that they were not. Jesus took their question at face value and gave them the right answer; "**you must believe in the one God has sent**" (Jn.6:29). In other words, God's will is that you believe in me. The final question they asked was, "John 6:30, **what sign will you give to show us that we should believe in you?** In other words, "why should we believe in you? Prove with a miracle that you really come from God. We believe in Moses because he gave the Manna to our forefathers in the desert; he gave them the food from heaven; but you... what are you capable of doing? John6:31. How incredible the **blindness of those Jews!** Jesus had fed them the previous evening (Jn.6:11-13).

Jesus answered all their questions and ignored their pride and selfishness and used the occasion to teach them. "**I am the bread of life, he who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst**" (Jn.6:35). All that Jesus did was to guide the people to make an act of faith in him; so that he could openly reveal to them the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist – the **Bread of Life**. Going to Jesus means believing in him, for it is through faith that we can approach our Lord, the Bread of Life. However, pride prevented the Jews from grasping the true meaning of Jesus' words. When we accept Jesus, the Bread of Life as our nourishment, we do not change him into ourselves, but rather, it is he who changes us into himself. The transformation goes on throughout our Christian life; and gradually we become another Christ. Let us throw pride away and always believe in Christ. St. Paul, in the second reading, has explained to us what believing in Christ really means. It means we should give up our life of sin and to live altogether a new life, life of holiness (Eph.4:22-24).

Finally, beloved in Christ, we are the new people of Israel on our way to the Promised Land, heaven, and Jesus is our leader. On our way to heaven, he gives us the **Bread of Life to sustain** us on our journey. He becomes our spiritual nourishment. Faith in Christ is our lantern that enlightens our way to heaven. Let us not be like "the Jews" who were blinded by pride, but humble ourselves and accept his teaching and put them into practice in our daily live. Let us pray in this Mass for grace to live a good Christian and Eucharistic life always. Amen!