

EUCCHARIST: SUPERNATURAL LIFE GIVING BREAD, SATISFYING HUNGRY HEARTS

KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES

We continue reflecting on Jesus' teaching about the "BREAD OF LIFE" in John's Gospel, chapter 6, verses 35-51.

As we mentioned in previous weeks, Jesus uses the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves in order to introduce what will become the centre of Christian Faith, the EUCCHARIST.

By this time, the crowds that followed Jesus anywhere he went, must have seen him work signs and wonders, as in feeding thousands with a few loaves and fish; miracles of healing: curing the paralyzed and those suffering from all kinds of sickness and diseases, giving sight to the blind, enabling the deaf to hear and the mute to speak, casting out demons, raising the dead!

Were all these signs proof enough for the people to accept Jesus for who he truly was, the "HOLY ONE OF GOD"?

Would all those supernatural signs they had witnessed, be enough guarantee that, whatever teaching he would give from now on, would be worthy listening to and accepting as TRUE?

Let us examine the words that Jesus spoke on that occasion:

Three times Jesus repeats "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE" (verses 35, 48, 51).

Bread and water were the basic needs that God provided for the people of Israel when they were journeying through the desert. Israel called the "manna" the "bread from heaven" because it had miraculously appeared in the morning hours of their journey, as if dropped from heaven.

Recalling that event, Jesus calls the people's attention to the fact that the manna satisfied the hunger for a short time. Jesus was actually saying to them: "the manna was not the REAL bread from heaven, because those who ate it were not fully satisfied, but got hungry again, and they died anyway! - I AM THE LIVING BREAD THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN. WHOEVER EATS OF THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOREVER" (verse 51).

Crowds followed and listened to Jesus because he spoke with authority, not like their Teachers (scribes) (Matthew 7:29).

But now Jesus is speaking like never before!

He is declaring to be himself the BREAD from HEAVEN that enables one to live FOREVER! (v.51)

Not only... but Jesus is superior to the manna, because "whoever comes to him, bread of life, WILL NEVER BE HUNGRY, and whoever believes in him WILL NEVER BE THIRSTY!" (v. 35).

WOW...! What did he mean by those words?

BUT WAIT! There is ANOTHER SURPRISE. We left the above verse 51 incomplete, because on that same verse Jesus finishes that sentence by adding: "... and the BREAD that I will give for the life of the world IS MY FLESH!!!" (verse 51).

That must have sounded like an unexpected explosion!

WHAT DID JESUS MEAN BY THAT LAST SENTENCE?

REAL OR SYMBOLIC?

We'll continue next week, God willing.