



Chapter 6 of John’s gospel describes how Jesus multiplied five loaves of bread and a couple of fish to feed five thousand men (adds Mt 14:21, “not counting women and children”). After the miracle, his disciples, without Jesus, embarked in a boat for Capernaum.

The people he had fed followed and found him. Jesus said to the them, “You are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you... I am the bread that came down from heaven.”

In today’s Gospel, the Jews murmur in reaction to the claim of Jesus, “How can this man say this? Is he not the son of Mary and Joseph? How can he come from heaven?” But Jesus sticks to his declaration.

His word is laden with surprises: first, he is bread and, second, he has come down from heaven. He is not just bread, but he also comes from heaven! Third, Jesus says that the person (who eats this bread) he will raise on the last day. This is not the last thing he says. He also affirms that “whoever believes has eternal life.” It is a challenging message: if a person believes in him (Jesus), that person will accomplish in himself what only God can do: enjoy eternal life!

To sum up, we can imagine Jesus telling the Jews, “I am bread (life-

THE GOD OF Surprises

by Fr. Dindo Purto, SSP



giving thing), not just a man like you, made up of flesh and blood. I come from heaven (that is, from another world, which can be called heaven). And ultimately, I don’t originate from a woman, although externally you see and believe that Mary is my mother. My origin is the God of heaven and earth, the Father. I have greater life-giving power than the manna your fathers ate in the desert, thanks to Moses. My gift to you is for eternal life, not just for a temporary sojourn in this world. One last thing: this food and bread is my flesh, even if it’s impossible for you to understand and accept it now. Because for God nothing is

impossible. You have seen how I was able to give life to dead people, how I could walk over seawater, how I could drive out demons from the bodies of possessed persons, how I could heal all other kinds of human illnesses, how I could still a storm at sea...”

And at the Last Supper with his disciples, Christ by his divine power will transform bread and wine into his flesh and blood. This makes real his promise, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day” (Jn 6:54).

Another divine work of wonder and surprise we should not put aside because it is part of the Christian Catholic faith is the meaning of Calvary and of redemption: Christ did not undergo his fate as a sinner or criminal. He accepted it in order to wash away with his blood, tears, and sweat the sins of mankind. God could have forgiven those sins by an act of the divine will or the pronouncement of a few words. But Jesus chose to show the power of divine love and forgiveness, to reveal also its extent, by suffering the agony and the torment of the passion and crucifixion. And when he felt that the work of redemption has been done, he pronounced those mysterious words, *Consummatus est*—“It is finished” (Jn 19:30). Three days after, he rose from the dead. He defeated death and sin. Jesus is the Son of God, the God of surprises.

PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF *MISSIO AD GENTES*

Service to Humanity’s Diverse Needs

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

Community living as good neighbors based on faith convictions should naturally issue in a commitment to social development and human liberation, a genuine service of humanity. This means serving the most unfortunate, witnessing to justice, defending the integrity of creation; this dimension of evangelization includes all areas of social concern, ranging from peace-building, education and health services, to promoting family life and good government. Areas of human development are vast areas of the Church’s evangelizing mission.

Pope Paul VI (EN 19) has noted that this dimension of

evangelization means more than simply preaching the Gospel “in ever wider geographical areas or to ever greater numbers of people.” It also means “affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, humanity’s criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life” which are in contrast to Gospel values.

For his part, Pope Francis (EG 183) asserts that “no one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without influence on societal and national life, without concern for the soundness of civil institutions, without a right to offer an opinion on events affecting society.” An authentic faith “always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave the earth somehow better than we found it.”

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 74[73]:20, 19, 22, 23)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Look to your covenant, O Lord, and forget not the life of your poor ones for ever. Arise, O God, and defend your cause, and forget not the cries of those who seek you.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—Jesus reveals himself as the Bread of Life; however, the Jews could not accept this because of their unbelief. Nonetheless, he persists in his claim because he knows that it is the Father who draws people to faith in him.

In this celebration, let us open ourselves to the Father's invitation to listen to the beloved Son, for Jesus alone has the words of eternal life. He alone can lead us back to the Father.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

(Pause)

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, *(strike your breast)* through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Almighty ever-living God, whom, taught by the Holy Spirit, we dare to call our Father, bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters, that we may merit to enter into the inheritance which you have promised.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading (1 Kgs 19:4-8) *(Sit)*

Elijah preaches God's word against King Ahab and his wicked queen Jezebel. Thus, he is persecuted. God sends an angel who restores Elijah's physical and moral strength.

A reading from the first Book of Kings

ELIJAH went a day's journey into the desert, until he came to a broom tree and sat beneath it. He prayed for death saying: "This is enough, O LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers." He lay down and fell asleep under the broom tree, but then an angel touched him and ordered him to get up and eat. Elijah looked and there at his head was a hearth cake and a jug of water. After he ate and drank, he lay down again, but the angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him, and ordered, "Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!" He got up, ate, and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.

— The word of the Lord.

All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 34)

R—Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Marfori

1. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will bless the LORD at all times;/ his praise shall be ever in my mouth./ Let my soul glory in the LORD;/ the lowly will hear me and be glad. **(R)**

2. Glorify the LORD with me,/ let us together extol his name./ I sought the LORD, and he answered me/ and delivered me from all my fears. **(R)**

3. Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,/ and your faces may not blush with shame./ When the afflicted man called out, the LORD heard,/ and from all his distress he saved him. **(R)**

3. The angel of the LORD

encamps/ around those who fear him and delivers them./ Taste and see how good the LORD is;/ blessed the man who takes refuge in him. (R)

Second Reading (Eph 4:30—5:2)

The Spirit we have received from God is kind and compassionate. By being true to the Spirit, we make our life a pleasing offering to God.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS:
Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Jn 6:51) (Stand)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live forever. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Jn 6:41–51)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

THE JEWS murmured about Jesus because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven,” and they said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” Jesus answered and said to them, “Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father

who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: *They shall all be taught by God.* Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (at the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and

the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—God’s love abounds for us. Let us now pray to God our Father to manifest his love for us as we plead to him with confidence:

R—Listen to your people, O Lord.

C—For Pope Francis, N. our bishop, priests, and deacons: May they be faithful in their commitment to God and to his people. May they lead the church towards a deeper desire for eternal life. We pray: (R)

C—For government and civil leaders: May they be zealous in their work of justice and peace to achieve God’s plan for the world. We pray: (R)

C—Against the pandemic: May the Lord heal and restore into wholeness all who are affected in any way by CoViD-19. Let them all find comfort in God. We pray: (R)

C—For all the faithful: May we find sure hope and strength in our daily partaking of the Eucharist. May we live loving each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. We pray: (R)

C—For our departed loved ones: May the Lord embrace them and grant them joy in his eternal embrace. We pray: (R)

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray: (R)

P—Almighty Father, help us to multiply your graces through our good works and solidarity with those who suffer. May we be filled with your blessings

necessary to bring service to our brothers and sisters through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



Presentation of the Gifts

(Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—Be pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of your Church, for in your mercy you have given them to be offered and by your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface V

(Sundays in Ordinary Time)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you laid the foundations of the world and have arranged the changing of times and seasons; you formed man in your own image and set humanity over the whole world in all its wonder, to rule in your name over all you have made and for ever praise you in your mighty works, through Christ our Lord.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration, we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.



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THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(Ps 147:12, 14)

O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord, who gives you your fill of finest wheat.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)

P—Let us pray. (Pause)

May the communion in your Sacrament that we have consumed, save us, O Lord, and confirm us in the light of your truth.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

May the God of all consolation order your days in his peace and grant you the gifts of his blessing.

All—Amen.

P—May he free you always from every distress and confirm your hearts in his love.

All—Amen.

P—So that on this life's journey you may be effective in good works, rich in the gifts of hope, faith and charity, and may come happily to eternal life.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Our celebration is ended. Go in the peace glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.