

17. April 2024  
God is waiting for us

Jn 6:35-40

*Jesus answered them: I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever hunger; no one who believes in me will ever thirst. But, as I have told you, you can see me and still you do not believe. Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me; I will certainly not reject anyone who comes to me, because I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will of him who sent me. Now the will of him who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me, but that I should raise it up on the last day. It is my Father's will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and that I should raise that person up on the last day.*

Jesus satisfies our hunger for truth and love. It is God who has placed in our souls a longing for these fundamental values. Without truth, life lacks that light which orders everything; and if it lacks love, it lacks that basic acceptance and security which it needs in its existence.

Now, love and truth are not simply a matter of following certain rules of life, nor of following a pre-established code; although these have their meaning and importance. Love and truth are found in the personal encounter with God. It is an encounter with love itself, which man experiences as a homecoming, for only in God's love does he find his true home. He will never hunger again, as the Lord says, nor will he ever thirst again. The soul is like *"a little child in its mother's arms"* (Ps 131:2). When it receives God's love it lacks nothing, and then the restlessness of the heart ceases. The search for the meaning of life and the existential questions of man find their final answer.

In the case of material food, the satisfaction it gives us soon disappears, and we have to look for it again and eat it. On the other hand, when we have found the Lord, we no longer need to search; we can grow day by day in His love. Certainly we need to cultivate this love and be careful not to wound it; we need to renew it and deepen it; to purify it and allow it to be purified. But once we have found it, we have come home, so to speak. The hunger and thirst within are quenched, as the Lord tells us.

Yet Jesus sees that some people who had met Him, even though they heard His words and saw His works, from healings and deliverances to the multiplication of the loaves, still did not truly believe in Him. This remains a mystery, for God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:4). The Lord emphasises this clearly in today's Gospel: He does not want any to perish and all to attain eternal life. This is God's will, and for this He sends His own Son into the world.

We cannot give an explanation for the fact that some believe and some do not. But we can take part in God's longing for all people to understand the greatness of His love, and we can also bear witness to it. So it is not just a matter of striving for our own salvation, but of becoming a sign of the Kingdom of God for others. To do this, we must truly live as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13-16).

Would that our life were so convincing that people could not pass by without questioning the secret behind it, without wondering what it is that moves and sustains us! Certainly such a testimony would also not be an infallible guarantee that people will find faith; but it would at least be an offer and a service on our part for people, which could help them to be well disposed for an encounter with Jesus. And, of course, we have prayer, through which we wholeheartedly implore God for the conversion of people.

It is God's immense love that calls man! And God Himself came into the world to make this love evident and palpable to all. St. Francis of Assisi wept, lamenting that "love is not loved". How much he had come to understand how much God loves us!

Jesus Himself is the bread of life, and in the wonderful gift of the Eucharist He constantly offers Himself to us, to draw us into the mystery of His love. Day by day He extends this invitation to us, and with infinite patience He waits for us, year after year, century after century, millennium after millennium... until the end of time!

Let us not leave Him waiting in vain!