

18. January 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“The Samaritans embrace faith”

Jn 4:27-42

Just then the disciples of Jesus came. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but none said, “What do you wish?” or, “Why are you talking with her?” So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” They went out of the city and were coming to him. Meanwhile the disciples besought him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” So the disciples said to one another, “Has any one brought him food?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.” Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

The encounter with Jesus had a decisive impact on the Samaritan woman. She even left behind the jar of water she had brought to the well. Without knowing it, she had already become the bearer of the living water of which the foreign rabbi had spoken to her. Jesus had already taken her into His ministry so that the Samaritans in that village would know who had come to them. The woman testified to what Jesus had done for her and that He knew what was hidden. Then she said to the people of her town, "Can this be the Christ?"

So we see that she had already received the testimony of the Lord and had become a messenger to her people, so that they went to Him to be convinced for themselves.

Meanwhile the disciples had returned from the city and urged Him to eat. But the Lord took advantage of the situation to teach them once again something beyond their natural understanding.

The disciples of this rabbi had to learn that they could not immediately understand everything the Master told them. They had to trust and wait patiently for the Spirit of God to reveal the meaning of His words. The same is true today, even though we have a long and authentic tradition and the Magisterium of the Church to interpret Jesus' words correctly. However, in our personal journey of following Christ, there may be times when we are in particular need of the light of the Holy Spirit, since we are not always able to immediately understand and interpret the Lord's words as they apply to our situation.

Jesus pointed out to the disciples that there is another food that is far more important than daily bread. It is the food on which He lives: to do the will of the Father who sent Him and to carry out His work.

The disciples will learn to understand that for the Lord everything revolves around this nourishment. His soul is full of it, He is hungry for it. Only the fulfilment of the Father's will can truly satisfy Him. God's work must be done, the work of redeeming humanity. This is what moves Jesus! It is a love that cannot be satisfied until it has fulfilled its mission.

Can we have this fervour? We have great models: the Apostles who, moved by the same Spirit as their Lord, tirelessly carried their message to the ends of the earth; the countless missionaries and saints who have become shining examples of dedication to God. Is it not true that our soul is only truly satisfied when it has done God's will? Is it not true that only then comes that peace which gives rise to joy and gratitude in the soul? Is it not true that only then does our soul become *"like a child is quieted at its mother's breast"* (Ps 131:2)?

Then let us live on the same nourishment that filled our Lord: to do the will of the Father and to fulfil the mission He has given us.

Jesus tells the disciples that they have been sent to reap what they have not sown. Others had toiled and laboured before them, and the Lord Himself had sown the seeds for an abundant harvest. And indeed, after the death and resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the faith was spread even beyond the borders of Israel through the ministry of the Apostles, especially St Paul.

But even then the disciples could see before their eyes the fields turning yellow for the harvest, announcing an abundant harvest, because many Samaritans came to Jesus and believed in Him. They recognised Him and confessed: You are the Saviour of the world.