
NO MORE HUNGER! NO MORE THIRST!



I offer you the following excerpts of the homily I gave at the Mass celebrated at the Place des Artisans, [Edmundston] during the Foire Brayonne.

AN AMAZING PROMISE

« I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. » [John 6:35] What good news this is, for us today. Jesus became our bread so that we may never hunger again. This is a marvel that passes all understanding. It is so hard to believe that when Jesus began talking to his disciples that he would give them his blood to drink and his flesh to eat, nearly everyone of them abandoned him, which made Jesus ask his disciples, *« Do you also wish to go away? »* [John 6:67] And Simon Peter answered, *« Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. »* [John 6:68]

AMAZING INSENSITIVITY

We are not always sensitive to the marvellous deeds which God continuously accomplishes. It seems that God gives us so many proofs of His love that we can no longer appreciate them. Saint Paul's advice is still timely: *« Be renewed in the spirit of your minds... and clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness... Put away pagan ways. »* [Ephesians 4:23-24] Like the pagans who knew nothing of the marvellous deeds we are celebrating. Like those people who no longer see Jesus as true God and true man, as the one who came among us to satisfy our hunger and quench our thirst. How sad it is to see so many Christians who can no longer recognise the true value of the miracle that is the Eucharist, as well as the wonderful actions that are baptism, the Church, and the Gospel.

GRIEVANCES

Poor Moses who had to lead the People of God into the desert! He became well acquainted with anguish and suffering. But one of the main reasons for his suffering were the interminable "grievances" of his brothers and sisters. In other words, there were not too many days that people did not complain! Complaining was constant and about anything and everything: against their leaders, against their stock of food... They remembered the fleshpots of Egypt which they no longer had. Through the intercession of Moses, the people received manna from heaven and quails, but it wasn't long before they began to complain about this food, too. They even complained on full stomachs! Poor Moses! He had to continually return before God, to pray and plead endlessly. Moses' life was not an easy one. And complaining continued even after the people had reached the promised land, and will continue for centuries and millennia. Even today, there are all kinds of grievances in our society and our Church. Who, really, will be able to satisfy our desires, quench our thirst, appease our hunger?

BECOMING "EUCHARISTS"

A phrase that is often found in our prayers and celebrations is "Help us become 'eucharists.' Help us become what we have received." One of Jesus' desires is to dwell among us, to come live in our midst. By receiving him in the Eucharist, he transforms us daily into his own likeness, from eucharist to eucharist. And once we realise that Jesus has given himself totally to be our bread of life, we can understand that we too must, with him, be bread of life for others. We too must give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. We must love as he loves, we must serve as he serves, we must give ourselves to all as he did. And when we know how Jesus prayed, how he gave thanks to God his Father for the marvels of His love, then there is no longer room for grievances and complaining, since all we find in us and in Jesus is a spirit of thanksgiving for all we have.

CONTEMPLATION

May every Sunday celebration which unites us to hundreds of millions of our brothers and sisters truly arouse our sense of marvel and our gratitude. Let us often contemplate the mystery of the Eucharist which is the summit of our faith. It is not by accident that in order to prepare for the Jubilee Year 2000 we have an annual eucharistic congress. The 1996 Congress which was held in the Restigouche Deanery summoned us to recall the words, actions, and attitudes of Jesus. The 1997 Congress, held in the Southern Victoria Deanery, reminded us that the Eucharist is at the heart of our mission. And in a few weeks, coordinators of the 1998 Congress will disclose the theme of the 1998 Congress to be held in the Upper Madawaska Deanery. May Jesus, our bread of life who appeases our hunger and quenches our thirst, who gives life to the world, bring to all humankind the peace and love it so ardently needs.

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