

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Apr 16th 2024

It is the Father

We continue with Chapter 6 of John. Jesus explains the nature of the Father in Heaven, in an attempt to clarify the misconception of the Jews. They believed it was Moses who provided their ancestors with Manna in the desert. So they said: He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Jesus corrects that notion. It was not Moses, but my Father in Heaven who gives you the bread from heaven. He goes on to explain four elements from their argument:

It is the Father - the initiator and the source of life;

The life that God offers is a pure gift – a gift that God longs to give;

The Father – the giver of life also nourishes the life with the bread from heaven:

And this heavenly bread is to be eaten: People need to believe, receive and actively absorb this bread from heaven.

This authentic bread came down from heaven gives life, not only to Israel but also to the whole world. The word – World – does not necessarily mean the universe. Rather it refers to the human society that is corrupted by the power of sin. It is to this concrete, broken, and corrupted world that Jesus wishes to give life. Unless this corrupted society is redeemed, the rest of the people would remain captive under their destructive influence.

Jesus would not only give bread from heaven, but he was the bread from heaven.

Jesus makes a self-description with the powerful words “I am ...” It contains a veiled revelation of Jesus’ divine origin.

... Whoever comes to me will never hunger. Whoever believes in me will never thirst.”

As Jesus had already promised the Samaritan woman: whoever drinks the water that I shall give will never thirst again [4:14], so now he promises the same to those who come to him: Those who undertake the journey of faith to believe in him, would never be hungry. To accept Jesus as the bread of life means coming to him and believing in him.

The offer of Jesus is not confined: whoever comes ..., whoever believes... Its outreach was inclusive and expressed the universal, unconditional love of the Father.

Let us desire for this bread through which our lives are nourished – “the Bread of Life”