

HOLY MASS: A FORETASTE OF HEAVEN

KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES

As we stated last week, unlike the other three synoptic gospels, John does not give us an account of the institution of the Eucharist. Instead John reports the detailed teaching given by Jesus on “the Bread from Heaven”, which follows the miracle of the multiplication of the bread (John 6).

Jesus begins his teaching by challenging the crowd’s motive for following him: “You are looking for me, not because you saw signs (that prove that I come from God to save you from your sins), but because you ate your fill of the loaves” (John 6:26).

Jesus continues: Why are you so preoccupied to satisfy your immediate needs for bread, which, like any other material comforts, does not last, but which you have today and it’s gone tomorrow. “Work instead for the food that endures for eternal life” (John 6: 27).

Jesus goes on by recalling the events which took place in the desert, at the time that the people of Israel were journeying towards the promised land, guided by Moses. During that journey God provided temporary food until they reached their destination. Similarly, Jesus points out, he provided a TEMPORARY miraculous multiplication of bread, in order to fill a need of the moment, while they were with him, away from home, in a deserted place.

But it was also meant to be a sign that JESUS COULD LIKEWISE SATISFY THE HUMAN NEED FOR GOD AND DESIRE FOR ETERNAL LIFE!

Jesus’ teaching is for us as well. He knows and sees how PREOCCUPIED we are for the IMMEDIATE and the NOW. He urges us to trust in God’s providence to supply to the needs of the moment, and to focus instead on eternal values, and what’s most important, as he says: “I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE. WHOEVER COMES TO ME WILL NEVER BE HUNGRY” (John 6:35).

OUR LIFE ON EARTH CAN BE COMPARED TO ISRAEL’S JOURNEY IN THE DESERT: what we possess is temporary and needed only for a short time.

Jesus, like a new Moses, leads our journey on earth, gathers us weekly around the altar, so we may receive in holy communion a FORETASTE of HEAVEN: the BREAD OF LIFE, given to us through the HOLY MASS.