



1. LECTIO

a) Opening prayer

Spirit of God, come from the four corners of the earth and breathe on these dead persons so that they may rise again (Ez 37: 9). Come Holy Spirit, breathe on our minds, hearts and souls so that we may become a new creation in Christ, firstborn into life eternal. Amen.

b) Gospel reading

Jesus said to them, "All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6, 37-40

c) Prayerful silent time

That the Word of God may enter into our hearts and enlighten our life.

2. MEDITATIO

a) A key to the reading

In John's Gospel, the basic perspective concerning Jesus and his mission is that the Word made flesh is sent by the Father into the world to give us life and to save that which was lost. The world, however, rejects the Word incarnate. The prologue of the Gospel presents us with this thought (Jn 1: 1-18), which the Evangelist will gradually elaborate in the Gospel story. The synoptic Gospels also, in their own way, proclaim the same news. One need only think of the parables of the lost sheep and the lost drachma (Lk 15: 1-10); or the declaration: I did not come to call the just, but sinners (Mk 2: 17).

This thought is also found in this passage: I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent (Jn 6: 38). This is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life (Jn 6: 40). The key words in John's Gospel are: see and believe. To see, implies and automatically means to believe in the Son sent by the Father. This attitude of faith brings the believer to possess eternal life. In John's Gospel, the salvation of the world is already fulfilled by the first coming of Christ through the incarnation and the resurrection of the one who

allows himself to be lifted up on the cross. The second coming of Christ on the last day will be a completion of this mystery of salvation.

Today's Gospel is taken from the section that speaks of the mystery of Jesus (Jn 1-12). The text takes us, for the second time in John's Gospel, to Galilee, at the time of the Passover: After this, Jesus went across the sea of Galilee... it was near the Passover, the feast of the Jews (Jn 6: 1, 4). A great crowd followed him, (Jn 6: 2) and Jesus seeing the crowd that followed him, multiplies the loaves. The crowd want to proclaim him king, but Jesus disappears and goes up to the mountain alone (Jn 6: 15). After a brief pause that allows us to contemplate the Lord walking on the waters (Jn 6: 16-21), the story continues the next day (Jn 6: 22), and the crowd goes on waiting for and seeking out Jesus. Then comes the discourse on the bread of life and Jesus' warning to obtain the food that will last forever (Jn 6: 27). Jesus defines himself as the bread of life and makes reference to the manna given to the people of God through Moses, as a figure of the true bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (Jn 6:, 30-36). This is the context within which the words of Jesus are pronounced and that we are using for our Lectio (Jn 6: 37-40). In this context, too, we come across a new kind of opposition and a new rejection of the revelation of the Christ as the bread of life (Jn 6: 41-66).

Jesus' words concerning everyone who goes to him, echo God's invitation to take part in the benefits of the banquet of the covenant (Is 55: 1-3). Jesus does not reject those who come to him, rather he gives them eternal life. In fact, his mission is to seek and save the lost ones (Lk 19: 27). We are reminded of this in the story of the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well (Jn 4: 1-42). Jesus does not reject the Samaritan woman, but begins a 'pastoral' dialogue with the woman who comes to the well to draw material water and there finds the man, the prophet and the Messiah who promises to give her the water of eternal life (Jn 4: 13-15). In our passage we find the same structure: on the one hand the people seek material bread and on the other Jesus gives them a long spiritual discourse on the bread of life. The witness of Jesus who eats the bread of God's will (Jn 4: 34) echoes the teaching of the Master in this Gospel passage (Jn 6: 38).

At the last supper, Jesus takes up this discourse again in chapter 17. It is he who gives eternal life (Jn 17: 2), preserves and watches over all those whom the Father has given to him. Of these none is lost except the son of perdition (Jn 17: 12-13).

b) A few questions

to guide our meditation and practice.

* The Word made flesh is sent into the world by the Father to give us life, but the world rejects the incarnate Word. Do I welcome into my life the Divine Word who gives eternal life? How?

* I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me (Jn 6: 38). In Jesus we see obedience to the will of the Father. Do I internalise this virtue in my life and live it out daily?

* Anyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life (Jn 6: 40). Who is Jesus for me? Do I try to see him with the eyes of faith, listen to his words, contemplate his way of being? What does eternal life mean for me?

3. ORATIO

a) Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want;
he makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

b) Closing prayer

O God, who at the table of your word and of the bread of life nourish us so that we may grow in love, grant that we may welcome your message into our heart so that we may become yeast and instruments of salvation in the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

4. CONTEMPLATIO

Contemplation is knowing how to adhere with one's mind and heart to the Lord who by his Word transforms us into new beings who always do his will. "Knowing these things, you will be blessed if you do them." (Jn 13: 17)