

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Dec 6th 2017

Wed 6th: First Reading: Is 25:6-10a, Responsorial Psalm: Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6, Gospel Reading: Mt 15:29-37m

We first saw Jesus healing all kind of diseases: cripples, the dumb, paralytics; they are laid at Jesus' feet and he deals with them all. But afterwards Jesus looks at the multitude and feels pity on them; they had already followed him for several days, just attending his preaching, and the time comes when they cannot go further. All this account reminds us of the long walk of Israel across the desert, after leaving Egypt. They had to endure hunger, thirst, but especially dejection, weariness. It was necessary for God to send the manna, the bread from heaven for Israel to be able to walk all the way until they reached the land of the promise.

Jesus' word "I have compassion on the crowd" can well apply in our world. Which kind of nourishment does our society offer us? Our minds are over-nourished with news, entertainment, ideologies, information, interpretation, which aren't enough to satiate the spirit. Much of what we have at hand is unhealthy.

In the gospel Jesus meets a big need with poor means. He asks his disciples: "How many loaves do you have? And immediately he orders the crowd to sit down on the ground; he takes the pieces of bread, gives thanks, and through the hands of the disciples, distributes the new bread to the people. We, Christ's disciples, don't have, on our own, enough nourishment for the hunger in our world, a hunger we experience ourselves: hunger of truth, justice, lack of communion, brotherhood, peace.

Today's first lesson brought us one of the prophecies, in which God promises all kinds of blessings, not only to his people, but to all mankind: "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, ... He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces..." We don't think these are real things, not for us. God's project is also ours. Jesus invites us to feel compassion on our world, on every human being who suffers any kind of evil, and to feel obliged to offer, not anything, but the bread that Jesus hands to us and that we hand over: the bread of love, of understanding, of hope and peace.

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