

Bread of Life and New Priesthood

The "Bread of Life" is God, the Creator Himself; eating this Bread is introducing **God within us and living within Him**. How can we be nourished by such a Meal? Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, revealed it:

" I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst...I am the living Bread which comes down from Heaven. Whoever eats this Bread will live for ever; and the Bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world'. Then the Jews started arguing among themselves: 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' Jesus replied to them: 'In all truth I tell you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no Life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal Life, and I shall raise him up on the last day...Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood **lives in me and I live in him...**'. After hearing this, many of his followers said :'This language is intolerable!...' Jesus told them: 'Does this offend you? What if you should see the Son of man ascend to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives Life, the flesh has nothing to offer. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are Life. But there are some of you who do not believe...'. After this, many of his disciples went away and accompanied him no more" (John 6,35-66).

The withdrawal of these unfaithful disciples did not discourage Jesus; He went on with his plan and, during the last Easter Supper He had with his apostles, He answered to the question the Jews had asked: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" In fact, He took some bread, then a cup of wine and gave them to his apostles:

"As they were eating, He took bread, and after He had said the blessing He broke it and said to them: 'Take it, **this is my body**'. Then He took a cup, and after He had given thanks, He handed it to them, and all drank from it, and He said to them: "**This is my blood**, the blood of the New Covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins...Do this in my memory..." (Marc 14,22-25 / Matthew 26,26-29 / Luke 22,15-20 / 1 Corinthians 11,23-25).

This new Easter Meal was instituted by Jesus the eve of his crucifixion by the Bread and Wine incarnating his Body and Blood, and consequently his Soul and divine Spirit as well. This Meal, because of its simplicity, deceived a great number of Jews who expected the messianic Meal to be glorious, victorious and outstanding, matching the ambitions of a Zionist earthly kingdom. This disappointment had been predicted by the prophet Hosea:

"The **threshing-floor** and **wine-press** will not feed them, the **new wine** will disappoint them" (Hosea 9,2).

The threshing-floor, where the grain was separated from the rest of the corn, is the symbol of the Bread of Life. The wine-press, where the grapes ferment into wine, is the symbol of the Wine of Life. Those who turn away from Jesus, do not nourish themselves from the heavenly products of the threshing-floor and the wine-press. They thus deprive themselves voluntarily from eternal Life. This is Jesus' divine Message to the world; this Message is still valid actually and will remain so until the end of the world.

The Quran also invites the believers at this heavenly Table:

-"The Disciples, said: "O Jesus, son of Mary! can your Lord send down to us a Table set **from Heaven**?" Jesus said: "Fear Allah, if you have faith!" They said: "We only wish to eat thereof

and satisfy our hearts, and to know that you have indeed told us the truth; and that we ourselves may be witnesses to the miracle." Jesus the son of Mary said: "O Allah our Lord! Send us from heaven a Table set, that there may be for us - for the first and the last of us - a solemn festival and a sign from You; and provide for our sustenance, for You are the best Sustainer (of our needs)." Allah said: "I will send it down unto you: But if any of you after that resists faith, I will punish him with a penalty such as I have not inflicted on any one among all the peoples." (Quran V ; The Table Spread, 112-115)

- "Truly the Righteous will be in Bliss: On raised couches will they command a sight (of all things). You will recognize in their faces the beaming brightness of Bliss. Their thirst will be slaked with **pure Wine** sealed: The seal thereof will be Musk: and for this let those aspire, who have aspirations: With it will be (given) a mixture of Tasnīm: A spring, from (the waters) whereof **drink those Nearest to Allah**. Those in sin used to laugh at those who believed" (Quran LXXXIII; Dealing in Fraud, 22-29).

(Refer to our text: "A Look of Faith at the Quran", chapter IV, article 3: "The Heavenly Table").

The lord Jesus attached such a great importance to this Bread of Life that He appeared Himself to Paul in order to reveal to him personally the institution and the Content of It. In fact, it was not by the apostles that Paul was informed about this vitally important fact, but by the Lord Himself as he declared it to the Corinthians:

"For I have received **of the Lord** that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread and, when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said: 'Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: do this in remembrance of me'. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: 'This cup is the New Testament in my blood; whenever you drink it, do this as in remembrance of me'. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes. Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone is to examine himself, and only then may eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Corinthians 11, 23-29).

This heavenly Bread and this heavenly Wine initiated a new priesthood that produced a new generation of priests. In fact, under the Torah, the priests used to slain animals which they then offered to God. They were, so to say, "sacred butchers" of a religious cult that had often and explicitly denounced by the prophets as being disagreeable to God and rejected by Him:

- "Sacrifice gives You no pleasure, burnt offering You do not desire. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, a broken contrite heart You never scorn" (Psalm 51,16-17).

- "For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices" (Jeremiah 7,22).

- "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?... You have already been told, O man, what is right and what Yahweh wants of you: only this: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6,6-8).

- "For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6,6).

- "Provide yourself with words (of repentance) and come back to Yahweh. Say to Him: 'Take all guilt away and give us what is good. Instead of bulls we will dedicate to You our lips'" (Hosea 14,3).

- "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I take no pleasure in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts...But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5,21-24).

The Quran also confirms the uselessness of the sacrificed animals and requires instead the prayer and the submission to God:

"It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah, it is your piety that reaches Him" (Quran XXII; The Pilgrimage,37).

Jesus, by offering his own body as a sacrifice, instituted a new generation of priests edified on the offering of his person on the cross. In order to belong to his priesthood, one must stop slaying and sacrificing animals, but one's own vices by scourging selfishness and materialism: "Jesus said to his disciples: 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' " (Matthew 16,24), "Go and learn the meaning of the word: mercy is what pleases Me, not sacrifice" (Matthew 9,13).

Thus, as we have already seen, it was during the last Easter Supper that Jesus instituted his new priesthood, the one of the **New Covenant** announced previously by the prophets, and particularly by Jeremiah:

"Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a **New Covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers...**Within them** I shall plant my Law, writing it **in their hearts**" (Jeremiah 31,31-34).

This messianic Meal had already and prophetically been symbolized, two thousand years before the Messiah's Advent, by the bread and wine offered to our Patriarch Abraham by Melchizedek. This latter was a "king and also priest of God Most High", although he did not belong to Abraham's family (Genesis 14,17-20). This is the reason for which King David, under divine inspiration, announced, one thousand years before Jesus, that the Messiah will be altogether a king and "a priest forever", but a priest "according to the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110,1-7), and no more according to the Jewish order of Aaron, the brother of Moses.

St Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews (chapters 5-7), explains this revolution in the Jewish priesthood; he summarizes it saying: "The priesthood being changed (by Jesus), necessarily means a change also of the Torah (the Jewish religious Law)" (Hebrews 7,12).

This change in the priesthood appears concretely in the Bread and Wine offered by Jesus at his mystic Table. The first Christians ardently recurred to this holy Food with simplicity, avoiding all conspicuous cult, armed with solid knowledge of the biblical prophecies concerning the Messiah's Advent, deep faith in Jesus, and brotherly genuine love. They shared this heavenly Meal around Jesus' spiritual Table in the intimacy of their respective homes:

"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in **breaking of Bread**, and in prayers... and **breaking Bread from house to house**, they shared their food with joy and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2,42-46).

In our actual apocalyptic era - in which we were introduced since the Antichrist appeared - this messianic priesthood, which has been disfigured by the traditional churches during the past centuries, is restored to its initial purity, by being liberated from all the pagano-folkloric rites and cults imposed on it. Thus appears the beating Heart of the Christian faith, namely the Body and Blood of the Messiah present in the Bread and Wine, this "reality which is the Body of the Messiah" (Colossians 2,17).

The Book of Revelation urges us to restore the priesthood as it had been practiced by the first Christians, with simplicity and warmth, in family. Jesus Himself invites us to do so:

- "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if anyone hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and **will sup with him**, and he with Me. (Revelation 3,20)

- "He (Jesus) loves us and has washed away our sins with his Blood and made us kings and priests to serve his God and Father" (Revelation 1,6)... You (Jesus) bought people for God of every race, language, people and nation, and made them kings and priests for God to rule the world" (Revelation 5,9-10).

The Book of Revelation incites us, therefore, to restore the priesthood of Jesus. Thus, the apocalyptic priests are also according to the order of Melchizedek and, consequently, they are completely independent and separated from the traditional churches, as Melchizedek was independent from the Jewish community. This is the spirit of freedom and independence to which Jesus invites us in John's apocalyptic Book. The practice of this apocalyptic priesthood had already been revealed by Jesus in the Gospel as a sign of his Return:

"Be like people waiting for **their Master to return** from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as He comes and knocks... In truth I tell you, He will do up his belt, **sit them down at Table** and wait on them" (Luke 12,35-40).

This "Table" is the "tree of Life set in God's Paradise" and the mystical "hidden Manna" Jesus promises to offer to his disciples in the Book of Revelation (2,7 and 3,17). In order to benefit of this holy Manna, one must imperatively believe in the interpretation given by Jesus Himself in 1970 about the Book of John's Revelation (See our text: "The Key of the Apocalypse").

The invitation to the restored priesthood is addressed to men as well as to women, whether married or bachelors, young or old. In the Kingdom of God, inaugurated by the Lord Jesus, all are equally children of God, all are equally invited to be priests of Christ without any discrimination, whether sexual, racial or other. Those who prevent married men from being priests, and priests from getting married, are hypocrites condemned by God Himself. This prevention reveals the **necessity of a restoration** and is one of the obvious signs of the end of times. In fact, Paul revealed that The Holy Spirit condemns firmly those "hypocrites" who, at the end of times, will forbid marriage:

"**The Spirit says explicitly** that, in the **end of times**, some will abandon faith; they will obey deceitful spirits and follow teachings inspired by devils; they are seduced by **hypocrites and liars** whose consciences are dead, as if burnt with a red-hot iron: **they forbid marriage...**" (1 Timothy 4,1-5).

Four items are to be underlined in this highly inspired and important text:

It is the **Holy Spirit**, not Paul, who revealed this abandon of faith; and He revealed it **explicitly**.

This abandon of faith occurs at the end of times. It is an important sign which confirms what Jesus had already predicted about this unfortunate period of the end of times (see Matthew 24,3-25). In fact, in the beginning of Christianity, priests and **even bishops** could get married. Paul said: "A bishop should be blameless, **the husband of one wife...**" (1 Timothy 3,2 / Titus 1,5-6).

Those who forbid marriage are those who abandon faith and follow deceitful spirits who, so very often, lead them to fall in the traps of various vices and to commit numerous immoralities which clearly appear today.

A restoration of the monastic vocation comes as an unavoidable consequence of what has been said. This isolating vocation belongs to the past and, though it produced a number of genuinely holy souls who joined it in good faith, it is not in line with God's plan: In fact, Jesus, the eve of his crucifixion, thus spoke to His Father in front of the apostles:

"Father...I gave them your message...I do not ask You **to take them out of the world**, but to protect them from the Evil One...**I sent them into the world** just as You sent Me into the world..." (John 17,14-18).

We are sent **into the world**, not nearby the world, not in its suburbs. Life with faith "into the world" is a challenge we must dare to face. It is among our human brothers and sisters that we, believers, can be of some help. "You are the light of the world", Jesus said, "No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub, but on a lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house" (Matthew 5,14-16). Those who hide themselves from the world are similar to the bad servant of the parable, a coward who hid his one and only talent because he was afraid to lose it, afraid of his Master. He should have put his trust in God and make this talent productive. He was finally rejected by the Master (Matthew 25,14-30).

The messenger of the Apocalypse, this "**powerful** Angel with a rainbow over his head" (Revelation 10,1-2), is sent with the **power to restore the priesthood** by inviting the believers, men and women of all races, at Jesus' Table without recurring to any ecclesiastical authorities. This power is accredited to him by God Himself through the "Small Open Book", the Book of Revelation which he presents, **open**, because clearly explained by Jesus. In fact, the "Rainbow" over his head is the sign of the Covenant between God and men (Genesis 9,12-17). This means that this Angel's sacred mission is to proclaim, on behalf of God, **the restoration** of the New Covenant. This restoration has already begun; it had been prophesied by Peter, it is actually operated by Jesus Himself who has already spiritually returned:

"Then He (God) will send you the Messiah he has predestined, that is Jesus, Whom Heaven must keep till the **Universal Restoration** comes, which God proclaimed speaking through his holy prophets" (Acts 3,21).

This restoration is "the New Heaven and New Earth", the "New Jerusalem" in which John saw no material temple (Revelation 21,22) since the priesthood evolved to the interior of the families and since the true notion of the temple is the believers themselves. Thus, any material religious building becomes obsolete and useless to the true believers.

(See our texts: "Cult and places of Cult", "Jesus Restores the Priesthood", "The Universal Restoration").

The purpose of the various churches is to gather the faithful around the Body of Jesus, the "Eucharist" as name call It, this wonderful Bread of Life. Nevertheless, today, God wishes to introduce this Heavenly Meal within the familial or personal intimacy. His Holy Will be done!

The entire humanity is invited to take part in this restored priesthood. All those who believe in the Book of Revelation as explained by Jesus on May 13, 1970 — men and women of all races, languages and colours — only have to say "yes" to become Jesus priests. This consecration to priesthood is undergone in privacy and spontaneously between Jesus-Christ and the person who answers positively to His Call. It is thus, very simply, that one is integrated in this priesthood and answers favourably to the invitation to Christ's Wedding Supper (Matthew 22,1-14). Only the unbelievers who deliberately refuse to respond to the divine call, as well as "those without a wedding garment", deprive themselves from this Supper. Thus, one must no more have to pass through a clerical hierarchy or a rite of laying hands. The Authority who confers this priesthood is the living Christ Himself who lays His blessed hands upon His believers since He Himself "washed us from our sins and made of us kings **and priests** to serve his God and Father " (Revelation 1,6).

For all those who have reached an adult faith, the one and unique true cult is embodied today in the Bread of Life Whom we can freely take into our homes. This is the Restoration and this is the First Resurrection the Revelation speaks about. "Blessed and holy are those who share in the First Resurrection; the second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ..." (Revelation 20,6). Paul is quite right in saying:

"The reality is the Body of Christ. Let none deprive you of it" (Colossians 2,17-18).