

2nd Pentecostal Sunday

The Bread of Life

“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst..... should have eternal life” ([John 6:35, 6:40](#))

The Holy Fifty Days is a radiant season of joy in the Resurrection of our Lord and in our own resurrection with Him. It is not merely a remembrance, but a participation in the new heavenly life inaugurated by Christ’s victory over death. As St. Luke the Evangelist records: “He presented Himself alive... appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God” ([Acts 1:3](#)). During this period, the Lord was not only proving His Resurrection but also preparing His disciples to live the life of the Kingdom, a life now made accessible to us through the Church.

In her divine wisdom, our Coptic Orthodox Church arranges the Gospel readings of these Sundays to unfold the mystery of this new life. Each Sunday centers on one of Christ’s “I AM” declarations: the Bread of Life, the Living Water, the Light of the World, the Way, and the “I have Conquered the world”. These are living realities that define our union with Him.

On this Second Pentecostal Sunday, the Church reads from the Gospel according to St. John the Apostle ([John 6:35-45](#)), where Christ reveals Himself as the Bread of Life. In this declaration, the Lord lifts our understanding from earthly sustenance to eternal nourishment. He is not offering something external to Himself, He gives Himself, whereby calling Himself the Bread of Life. Christ unveils the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, the sacrament through which we receive eternal life.

Through partaking of His Body and Blood, we are united to Him in a real and life-giving union. As Saint Cyril the Great explains: “He calls Himself the Bread of Life... not corporeal bread, but that which gives life to the whole being, transforming it toward incorruption. Through His holy Body, the life proper to the Only Begotten is implanted in us.” This Eucharistic union is not symbolic, it is transformative.

Saint Athanasius the Apostolic echoes this mystery, affirming: “For He became man that we might become divine.” (*Pope Shenouda III said, this expression according to St. Athanasius, does not mean that a person becomes divine by nature; rather, it means that he partakes in the divine life, the life of righteousness and holiness.*)

Christ declares: “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst” ([John 6:35](#)). In the Old Testament, the people of Israel ate manna in the wilderness, bread sent from heaven, yet they died. As Moses led them through the desert, that manna sustained their bodies temporarily. But Christ gives us a new Manna, His own Body, which grants eternal life. Saint John Chrysostom explains this contrast: “That manna was given for this life; but this Bread is given for eternal life... whoever eats of it shall never die.”

This truth is beautifully expressed in the Fraction prayers, where the Church proclaims that Christ “gave Himself for us as a holy sacrifice... for the remission of sins and eternal life to those who partake of Him”. Also, Pope Shenouda III writes: “The Eucharist is not merely a ritual we attend, but a life we receive... Christ abides in us and we in Him”. Every Divine Liturgy, then, is not a repetition but a renewal, a real encounter with the risen Christ. Each time we partake, we are drawn deeper into communion with Him, strengthened against sin, and nourished for eternal life.

Therefore, as we approach the Holy Mysteries, let us do so with reverence, faith, and thanksgiving. Let us also remember the beauty of this gift that Jesus provided us. Through His death on the Cross and His glorious Resurrection, Jesus has made Himself our Bread, our life, and our eternity.

References

- The Holy Bible, English Standard Version
- Commentary on the Gospel of John
- *Treasures of the Fathers*
- Saint Athanasius the Apostolic
- Saint John Chrysostom
- Pope Shenouda III
- Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty