

It is said that Mother Teresa of Calcutta was once invited to a TV show here in the US, where people were promoting the best breakfast foods. She remained silent while the show was going on; but once she was given the floor, she redirected the topic to “spiritual food” and said, “It seems that you ignore your real hunger and therefore the only real bread that we really need is Jesus Christ!

Indeed, this is the hunger of people of all times. It was this hunger that the Jews of the living in Greece had felt when they came to the Passover festival to worship, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus,” they had said to Philip who, in turn, said it to Andrew and who, together, were going to tell it to Jesus.

And what was Jesus’ reaction? He explained to them the mystery to come through the image of the grain of wheat, widely used in everyday life at that time: “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.”

Behind this natural reality lies the theological meaning of the necessary passage through death to access rebirth and salvation. He meant that it is only through death that resurrection, that is, the fruit and new life arrive; as St Francis of Assisi said that “It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

Like the wheat ground to produce the flour that makes bread, it is through his suffering and death willingly accepted that Jesus became bread for us all on the night of the last Supper.

And yet, the meaning of the grain of wheat which dies is not limited to that single moment; because by saying to the Disciples, and now to us, “take, eat and drink” it is we who in fact are taken. We are therefore invited to be one with the One whom the Greeks came to meet and ask Him how to grow faithfully in a relationship with Him. We invited to configure ourselves to Him.

To configure ourselves to Jesus is to agree to become Him Whom we receive in the Eucharist. It’s striving to become a grain of wheat that dies; because we too are made for the total gift of ourselves in love. In fact, no one is made for himself. We are made to love. This is the general point of each Mass. Love is to will the good of the other.

The more we participate in the life of Christ, the more we grow in a relationship with Him. The more we grow in a relationship with Him, the more we understand that before the end of each Mass, the Eucharist is not only saved in the Tabernacle for the next Mass, or communion of the sick and for adoration of the Lord in the Holy Sacrament. On the contrary, our bonds with Christ and with the human family are renewed, strengthened and deepened. Therefore, we are invited to commit ourselves to others, especially the most vulnerable in whom our Lord expects to be recognized, served, honored, loved. So, the question still arises: how can we become a grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies for another?

Becoming this grain of wheat is simple but not easy. We must ask the Lord, with the earnest desire to live our Christian vocation, to show us everything

that, in our life, we do only for ourselves. How are we selfish with our time? Our money? Our talents? Our bodies?

Brothers and sisters, like those pilgrims more than two thousand years ago, or more recently like those people of the time of Mother Teresa, people of our time are hungry for Christ and His love; most have never experienced it. Furthermore, there are many others who want to bear fruit for the world, for their countries, for their community, for their families, for their loved ones, for the Church but who are just afraid of letting themselves be transformed; that is, dying to themselves.

Our mission is to reach out to them to not only “speak” about Jesus Christ, but also to let them “see” Him through what we do. And to be able to do that, as Mother Teresa said, “we need the Eucharist, we need Jesus in the Holy Communion, we need the Bread of Life. That is why Jesus made Himself Bread of Life to satisfy our hunger for His love. And then He makes Himself the Hungry One so that we can satisfy His hunger for our love.”

At the end of the Gospel today, a voice spoke. The crowd got confused, but Jesus told them, “This voice did not come for my sake but for yours.” Today, it is for our sake that this voice speaks. All what it’s waiting for is the amen of our faith and our commitment. So, today if you listen to the Lord, harden not your hearts.