

The Bread of the Church

The fast of the apostles is the period of commemorating the start and spread of the church which is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23) in the whole world by the preaching of the apostles.

The greatest and most superior gift which the church gives us is that it makes us members in the body of Christ through the communion of the Holy Eucharist, the body and blood of Jesus, as written “Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1Cor 10:17). This bread is the bread about which Jesus said “I’m the bread of life” (John 6:35), “I’m the living bread that came down out of heaven, if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread which I shall give is My flesh” (John 6:51).

If we tried to think how this bread could give eternal life, we should first think about the normal bread and food in general. We find that the food we eat has a certain cycle in the nature whether vegetarian or non vegetarian, as the humans and animals eat it and grow up and then they die and their bodies decay and go to the earth and fertilizer it to give forth plants and trees for feeding man and animals again, and the cycle keeps going on. The same applies to everything in nature, everything goes in cycles. The blood circulates in the body starting from the heart and returning back to it. The water has its own cycle as well, it starts as huge water collections, the seas, the oceans, the rivers and then it evaporates, condenses forming clouds and then falls again as rain and so on..... Even the human being has his own cycle, he is born as a child, grows up to be an adult, gets married and brings children again and the cycle continues.

Now we return back to our start point, the holy bread which is the body of our Lord Jesus. We believe that Jesus Who is the Logos of God and His wisdom was incarnate in the fullness of time and took flesh. This flesh is united with His divinity and they did not separate for a single moment nor a twinkling of an eye. Even on the cross nor when His human soul separated His human body, which we define as the death on the cross, nor when buried and raised on the 3rd day in the glorious nature and ascended to the heavens after 40 days of His resurrection and now in heaven and forever unto the age of all ages.

In every holy mass, the Holy Spirit comes upon the bread and wine and converts them to the true body and blood of Jesus as He said to His disciples in the last supper (Luke 22:19-20), and we partake of Them. We partake exactly the same very true body and blood of Jesus Who was on the earth two centuries ago and Who is still living now and forever, so we get united with Him. And since He is imperishable and not under the influence of time or periodic cycles, we get the ability to share Him the life forever.

That's why He said, "I'm the bread of life" (John 6:35). So anyone who doesn't eat the bread of life shall not have an eternal life but eternal perish because the human spirit itself is imperishable.

The question that may come up now is, does anyone who partakes of this holy bread will have eternal life? The answer is of course no, but only those who are worthy of Him as St. Paul said "Therefore whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly" (1Cor. 11:27-29).

So it's now time to examine ourselves and start purifying our hearts and souls to be worthy of the communion of the Lord in His body and blood. And you may hear King David the psalmist and St. Paul the apostle whispering in your ears saying, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Ps 95:7-8), (Heb. 3:15).

And thanks to the church of the apostles that had made us members in the body of Christ here on earth, and if we are just and upright, we shall continue to the non-ending eternity.