

CONMEMORATION OF THE DEAD – 2nd November 2014

**EVERYONE WHO LOOKS ON THE SON AND BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD HAVE ETERNAL LIFE,
AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP ON THE LAST DAY – Commentary Biblical by Father Alberto Maggi
OSM**

John 6, 37-40

And Jesus said to them....All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

For the commemoration of the faithful departed, the liturgy has chosen verses from John's gospel, Jesus' long speech in the synagogue at Capernaum on the bread of life, chapter 6, 37-40.

In this long speech to his disciples Jesus says that he made Himself bread , food of life, because all those that welcome it are able in their turn to make bread and food of life for the others. In this receiving of bread, that is Jesus, and in making bread for the others there is this communication of God's life, of a divine life, with the capacity of overcoming death.

But let's listen to what according to John Jesus says, "*All that the Father gives me will come to me.*" The need of the fullness of life that the Father as creator has imposed into each one finds the complete answer in Jesus. Jesus is God's complete answer to the need of the fullness of life that every person has inside.

Jesus says "*..and whoever comes to me I will never cast out ..*" The verb "to cast out" appears 6 times in this gospel twice when Jesus casts out the sheep from the temple and then from the enclosure of the religious institution, meaning that the freedom that Jesus has come to bring to His disciples; for once it is the institution that casts out, throws out from the temple those that believe in Jesus, and the last time – positive-the announcement that the prince of the world will be thrown out.

It is the victory of life over death, of the light over the darkness. Jesus does not cast out anyone, he only welcomes.

“For I have come down from heaven,...” “This coming down from heaven should not be understood in a spatial sense, but theologically. Meaning that Jesus’ origin is not merely human, but divine. With the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus, the Christ, is the definite presence of God amongst mankind.

The evangelist, at the end of his prologue, had written that no one had seen God, only his only son is the revelation. Jesus is the full manifestation that God is amongst mankind.

“..not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.” The will of the father and the will of Jesus are identical: both want to communicate life, an abundant life, to mankind. And then Jesus says *“And this is the will..”* with a definite article, there are not many wills. Sometimes the will of God is made to coincide with the tragic, sad and the suffering events of life, in the gospel the will is unique and positive.

Let’s hear it. *“And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”*

For the first time in John’s gospel appears the expression “the last day” that will appear seven more times, four of which in this long speech, always associated to the verb “ to rise again”. The last day in John’s gospel is that of Jesus’ death.

When Jesus, announcing that all is accomplished, that God’s project for humanity has been realized, delivers His spirit, donates the spirit. Therefore the last day is the day of death, but it is an explosion of life. Jesus, in dying, delivers the life of God, delivers His spirit. *“For this is the will of my Father...”*,

Jesus repeats again, to emphasize what the will is. And he is defined as the son of Man, He has already been defined the son of God, here it says only the “son”. To see the son means to recognize the capacity of man to be the son of God himself as the project of the creator. *“..everyone who looks on the Son and believes, in him should have eternal life, ..”* it is translated without the article. Why this definition by the evangelist? Why the omission of the article? Because eternal life could have been thought as that of the Jewish belief, the life that begins after death, as a reward for good conduct in the present life. No, Jesus says *“..should have eternal life,..”* a life already eternal, not for the indefinite duration, but for the quality, that is divine and therefore indestructible.

The gift of the spirit, Jesus assures us, brings with it the gift of resurrection already in this life. Jesus will say later that who believes in Him shall never experience death.