

For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.*

John was writing his eye-witness account of Jesus some thirty years later than the other three accounts, possibly around 95AD. There had been time for growth, reflection and observation. Many thousands of Christians had by then lost their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in Rome and in Jerusalem. John himself had been in prison and was now in exile, the last of Jesus' twelve apostles to remain alive.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

John 6: 1-35

Douay Rheims Version

Christ feeds five thousand with five loaves. He walks upon the sea and discourses of the bread of life.

1. After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias.
2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased.
3. Jesus therefore went up into a mountain: and there he sat with his disciples.
4. Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand.
5. When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?
6. And this he said to try him: for he himself knew what he would do.
7. Philip answered him: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one may take a little.

over some thousands of years, until God translated him without dying from Paradise to heaven. (2.) A healthy and strong life. (3.) One without disease, or old age. (4.) Joyful and glad, for it would have driven away all sadness and melancholy. So in all these respects does the Eucharist far excel. For It bestows upon communicants not only a prolonged, but an eternal life. Wherefore the tree of life was a type of the Eucharist, as S. Irenæus teaches (*lib. 3, c. 2*). Moreover the Eucharist not only feeds and sustains the soul, but the body also, as theologians teach. Indeed, S. John the abbot, S. Catharine of Sienna, S. Maria Digniacensis, S. Elrulphus, Abbot, and many others, lived for a long time upon the Eucharist alone, without any other food. Moreover the emperor, Louis the Pious, during his last sickness fasted forty whole days, in which he partook of no food but the daily Eucharist, as is testified by a writer who was present.

He that cometh unto Me, &c. Because I will give him such bread as will take away all hunger, and such drink as will quench all thirst. Christ having said that He was the Bread of Life, here tells us the way to obtain this Bread. This way is that a man should come to Him, which means to believe in Him, as He by and by explains. For we come to Christ not by bodily footsteps (for so the unbelieving Jews, and His crucifiers came to Him), but by the steps of the soul, such as faith, obedience, and charity. *Shall not hunger, "for ever;"* for this "for ever" must be understood from the "for ever" after *thirst*. The meaning is, when the manna was eaten it appeased hunger, but only for a time, but I, who am the Bread of life, bestow upon him who eateth only once in the Eucharist such satisfying fulness that he will require no other food, yea, that he will never feel hunger more, because I bestow upon him the blessed and immortal life of grace and glory, which fulfils and satisfies every desire of man.

He that believeth. . . never thirst, because I will give him in the Eucharist the drink of My Blood, by which refreshed and satisfied, he shall never thirst. Hear Cyril: "What then does Christ promise? Surely nothing corruptible, but a blessing which we obtain by the communication of the Body and Blood of Christ. By this we shall be brought back to such a perfect state of incorruption as not to need corporeal food and drink. For the Body of Christ quickens us and by Its participation brings us to incorruption." For though it be that the faithful laity do not take or drink the Eucharist under the species of wine, as priests do, but eat of It under the species of bread only, still under that species of bread they not only eat the Body of Christ, but also drink His Blood, because the Blood cannot be separated from the Body of Christ, forasmuch as It is immortal and glorious. For in things spiritual *to hunger* and *to thirst* have the same meaning. And *food and drink* mean the same thing. "*He that cometh to Me,*" saith Augustine, "is the same thing as, *he that believeth in Me. He shall not hunger* means also *he shall never thirst*. By both expressions is signified that eternal satisfying where there is no want." In fine, *he shall never thirst* is that which is said in Ps. xxxv. 9,

Bread is truly the Son of God, and God Himself.

Cometh down: not in the past, but the present tense. The Greek is *καταβαίνων*, the *present participle*. The expression therefore signifies the perpetual descent of Christ upon the Eucharistic altar even to the end of the world. For when so ever the priest consecrates the Eucharist, Christ, who after His death ascended into heaven, comes down from thence to the consecrated *species* of bread, and in them declares His presence (*Se presentem sistit et exhibet*).

Gives: verily Christ is the infinite gift, who is Life Itself, who quickens all the faithful who communicate rightly throughout the whole world, and who gives them the heavenly and Divine life of grace here, and hereafter the life of glory to all eternity.

Ver. 34.—*They said therefore, &c.* “Without labour, in pleasant ease let us eat joyfully this Bread, that It may prolong our life, like the tree of life in Paradise, that we may reach the years of Methuselah.” For the carnal Jews did not yet understand that the Bread of Christ was spiritual, and thought only of earthly things. “As yet,” says S. Chrysostom, “they were looking for something material, as yet they were expecting the satisfying of their appetite.” As S. Augustine says, “Give us bread which may refresh, and never fail.” For as Cyril says, “Although by many words the Saviour drew them away from the carnal sense, they profited nothing, nor at all drew back from carnality, for when they heard of the Bread which is given for the life of the world, they understood it of earthly bread. They were like that Samaritan woman, who, when she had heard a long discourse of Christ concerning the spiritual water, sank down to the remembrance of earthly streams, saying, *Lord, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*”

Ver. 35.—*Jesus saith . . . not thirst for ever.* Syrian and Arabic, *for eternity*. Here Christ to the Jews who asked for bread to feed them unto life eternal, opens It out, and offers It, and declares that It is Himself. For He by His grace and Spirit, which He breathes into the faithful, so nourishes them that they may live always. But peculiarly He feeds them with the Eucharistic Bread, with which this whole discourse of Christ has to do. Hear Cyril: “In these words He sets forth the life and grace of His most Holy Body, whereby the essence (*proprietas*), *i.e.*, the life of the Only-Begotten, enters and abides in us.” For Christ in the Eucharist is rightly called Bread: (1.) Because by consecrating bread, He transforms it into His Body, which under the species of bread, the substance being annihilated, alone remains. (2.) Because like bread, It takes away hunger, it feeds and sustains life, satisfies and cheers. Hear Cyril: “For that was not the true manna, nor that the true heavenly bread: but He Himself, the Only-Begotten Son, is the *true Bread*: for since He is of the Substance of the Father, He is by nature all-quickening Life. For as this earthly bread has the quality of sustaining and preserving our weak flesh, so does He by the Holy Spirit quicken our spirits, and deliver our bodies themselves from corruption.”

The Bread of life, i.e., living, vital, quickening, yea, life itself. There is allusion to the tree of life (Gen. ii. 9). For that wood, or tree of life, by its own fruit, would have given life to Adam in Paradise. And this life would have been (1.) a prolonged life, extending

8. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him:
9. There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes. But what are these among so many?
10. Then Jesus said: Make the men sit down. Now, there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand.
11. And Jesus took the loaves: and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down. In like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would.
12. And when they were filled, he said to his disciples: gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost.
13. They gathered up therefore and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above to them that had eaten.
14. Now those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world.
15. Jesus therefore, when he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, fled again into the mountains, himself alone.
16. And when evening was come, his disciples went down to the sea.
17. And when they had gone up into a ship, they went over the sea to Capharnaum. And it was now dark: and Jesus was not come unto them.
18. And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew.
19. When they had rowed therefore about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking upon the sea and drawing nigh to the ship. And they were afraid.
20. But he saith to them: It is I. Be not afraid.
21. They were willing therefore to take him into the ship. And presently the ship was at the land to which they were going.
22. The next day, the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other ship there but one: and that Jesus had not entered into the ship with his disciples, but that his disciples were gone away alone.
23. But other ships came in from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they had eaten the bread, the Lord giving thanks.
24. When therefore the multitude saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they took shipping and came to Capharnaum, seeking for Jesus.
25. And when they had found him on that other side of the sea, they said to him: Rabbi, when camest thou hither?
26. Jesus answered them and said: Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled.
27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you. For him hath God, the Father, sealed.
28. They said therefore unto him: What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?
29. Jesus answered and said to them: This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent.

30. They said therefore to him: What sign therefore dost thou shew that we may see and may believe thee? What dost thou work?

31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32. Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you; Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world.

34. They said therefore unto him: Lord, give us always this bread.

35. And Jesus said to them: I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.

36. But I said unto you that you also have seen me, and you believe not.

37. All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me, I will not cast out.

38. Because I came down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him that sent me.

39. Now this is the will of the Father who sent me: that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again in the last day.

40. And this is the will of my Father that sent me: that every one who seeth the Son and believeth in him may have life everlasting. And I will raise him up in the last day.

41. The Jews therefore murmured at him, because he had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

42. And they said: Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then saith he: I came down from heaven?

43. Jesus therefore answered and said to them: Murmur not among yourselves.

44. No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. And I will raise him up in the last day.

45. It is written in the prophets: And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh forth me.

46. Not that any man hath seen the Father: but he who is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47. Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in me hath everlasting life.

48. I am the bread of life.

49. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert: and are dead.

50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it, he may not die.

51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

52. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

53. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

54. Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.

55. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day.

56. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed.

57. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me: and I in him.

and that to the whole world.

(2.) Because the manna was not really bread from heaven, but only from the atmosphere, coming down like dew, or hail. For it is only *the bread of heaven* by a figure of speech, as we say *the birds of heaven*, because they fly in the heaven, that is, in the air. But His bread, He said, really came down from the highest heaven, even from the Bosom of God the Father. Therefore It alone was truly heavenly and Divine, of which, in truth, the manna was only a type and shadow. So S. Chrysostom, &c.

(3.) The third way is consequent upon this—that the manna only fed the body for a time: but the Bread of Christ feeds and quickens both body and soul for ever. So SS. Chrysostom and Cyril. For though it be that Christ and the Eucharist do not remove temporal death from Christians who communicate devoutly, yet it is the cause that they will rise again from death, and after that die no more for ever. For the Resurrection is an effect of the Eucharist, as will appear from verse 50.

Cyril (*lib. 3, c. 33*) adds a fourth way: that Moses neither formed, nor gave the manna, but God gave it by angels at Moses' prayer: but Christ Himself forms, and verily gives this bread of the Eucharist. For He Himself by His own omnipotence, which, together with the Divine Essence, He has received from the Father, transubstantiates, trans elements, and transforms bread and wine into His Body and Blood.

The true Bread from heaven: that is, truly heavenly and Divine, not only as regards locality, in that It descends from heaven, but also as regards Its nature and substance. For *this* Bread is Christ Himself, Who, because He is God, has a heavenly and Divine essence, yea, the same Deity as the Father. 2. The word "*true*" is said because of the manna, say Cyril, Chrysostom, and Augustine; for the manna was only a type of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist is reality (*veritas*), in the manna, the shadow of the reality. 3. *True*, in the sense of life-giving, because It gives life to the soul as well as the body, as Christ saith in the following verse. 4. *True*, i.e., *perfect, excellent*, in which there is all fulness, both of existence and nourishment. For all created existences, such as the manna, if they be compared with the uncreated Essence, or the Deity, such as Christ in the Eucharist, cannot be accounted of as realities, but only shadows. In God and Christ alone is there reality (*veritas*), i.e., solidity and plenitude of Being, and of feeding perfectly, like (true) Bread. This is what God spake to Moses, "I Am I who Am: thus shalt thou say to the sons of Israel, He who is hath sent me" (Ex. iii. 14).

Ver. 33.—*For the Bread of God*, &c. Christ proves that not the manna, but His own Bread, i.e., He Himself, is true Bread, i.e., truly heavenly and Divine, by two arguments. 1. Because He alone really came down from heaven. 2. Because He alone gives true life to the world, i.e., the blessed and eternal life, which only is true life. Observe: *this* Bread is called the Bread of God, because formed by God alone, and the property of God alone. Because God lives by Himself and His own Divinity: and because *this*

rest, who knew and thought less of Jesus. For they had seen the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves the day before, whereby Christ had fed five thousand men, but upon this they set small value, and ask for one still greater and more wonderful. As though they had said, "Thou, O Jesus, askest of us a great, nay a stupendous thing, namely that we should believe in Thee as the Messiah and the Son of God. But for this the miracle of the loaves which Thou wroughtest yesterday, does not suffice. For Moses did a similar, yea, a greater work. Show us therefore a heavenly and Divine and worthy sign, by which God may attest that Thou art His Son, and our Messiah." Therefore they add by way of explanation,

Ver. 31.—*Our fathers . . . as it is written (Ps. lxxviii. 24).* As though they said, "Moses fed our fathers in the desert, even more than six hundred thousand men, with heavenly and most sweet food, ever the manna, and that daily for forty years, which was a greater thing than Thy multiplication of the loaves yesterday: and yet Moses did no wish to be accounted, or believed to be Messiah, and the Son of God, Since then you, Jesus, desire to be so accounted of, it is necessary that you should work greater miracles than Moses." So SS. Augustine and Cyril. The latter adds, "Such was the sign they asked of Christ, and thinking it a small matter that they had been miraculously fed for one day, they ask for food for a long period without labour. On such terms they seem to promise that they will assent to His doctrine." As though they said, "Feed us all our lives, as Thou didst feed us yesterday, and as Moses fed our fathers for forty years. Then we will believe Thee when Thou declarest that Thou art Messiah, the Son of God." So reasoned the Jews, as being animal and carnal, when they ought rather to have reasoned according to the spirit, thus, "This Jesus has multiplied bread, He heals whatsoever sick persons He pleases, He casts out devils, He raises the dead, and does many other miracles which Moses did not do. And He does them with this very end and object, that He may by them prove that He is the Messiah sent by God: therefore He must be truly the Messiah." When Moses gave the manna, and showed other signs, he did not do them in order that he might prove that he was the Messiah, but only a leader of the people, and a lawgiver sent by God. Wherefore the people believed in him, and so accounted of him. "Do you therefore in like manner," saith Jesus; "believe in Me, and account Me to be such a one as I prove by My miracles that I am, even the Messiah."

Bread from heaven, i.e., heavenly, in heaven, or in the air, formed by angels, and raining down, or rather snowing and hailing from thence into the camp of the Hebrews. For the manna came down like small hailstones from the sky. The Hebrew of Ps. lxxviii. 24 is ,שכימ דגן דעגן degan scamaim, corn or wheat of heaven.

Ver. 32.—*Jesus said therefore, &c.* Christ here refutes the cavilling of the Jews, and shows that He is greater than Moses, and gives better bread than Moses gave in giving manna. He opposes therefore, and prefers His own bread, *i.e.*, Himself in His Body in the Eucharist, as He Himself unfolds (Vers. 35, 51, 54, &c.) to the Mosaic manna, and this in three ways.

(1.) The first is, because Moses, who was a mere man, gave the manna, and that only to Israel, *i.e.*, to the Jews in the desert: but it is God the Father who gives this bread,

58. As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.
59. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever.
60. These things he said, teaching in the synagogue, in Capharnaum.
61. Many therefore of his disciples, hearing it, said: This saying is hard; and who can hear it?
62. But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you?
63. If then you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?
64. It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.
65. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe and who he was that would betray him.
66. And he said: Therefore did I say to you that no man can come to me, unless it be given him by my Father.
67. After this, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.
68. Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away?
69. And Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.
70. And we have believed and have known that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.
71. Jesus answered them: Have not I chosen you twelve? And one of you is a devil.
72. Now he meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for this same was about to betray him, whereas he was one of the twelve.
- Ver. 1.—*After this, &c.* Tiberias is here named, because the desert in which Christ fed the five thousand was near to Tiberias.

After this, not immediately, but almost a year afterwards. For the healing of the paralytic, and the dispute of Jesus with the Jews consequent upon it, which John had related in the foregoing chapter, took place in the beginning of the second year of Christ's ministry. But the things which he relates in this sixth chapter took place at the close of the same year. This is plain because Christ healed the paralytic at the Passover (v. 1). But He did the things now to be related shortly before the Passover of the year following, as appears from the 4th verse. John therefore omits all that Christ did in the second year of His ministry, viz., His creation of Twelve Apostles, His Sermon on the mount, His sending His Apostles forth, as well as many other things. John omits them because they had been fully narrated by the other Evangelists. But he here inserts the narrative of the multiplication of the loaves, because, though related by the other Evangelists, it was the occasion of Christ's discourse concerning spiritual

food, and the food of the Eucharist, which John here gives at length, and which was wholly passed over by them.

Ver. 3.—*He saith unto Philip, &c.* Observe, this was the order of what was done. Christ beholding from the mountain the crowd which followed Him, came down to them and received them kindly, taught them, and healed their sick until the eventide. The evening being at hand, His disciples asked Christ to dismiss the multitude, and refresh Himself with food. But Christ bade them first feed the hungry throngs. This, they said, was impossible, because 200 denarii worth of bread would not suffice for so many. By and by Christ proposed the same thing to Philip, probably because he had been most anxious in asking Christ to dismiss the multitude. Philip gave the same answer as the others with regard to the quantity of bread that would be required.

Ver. 11.—*When He had given thanks* to God the Father, looking up to heaven, He implored the help of God to multiply the loaves. Then He blessed them (as the other Evangelists relate), and the Syriac has here, *He distributed to those who had sat down*, miraculously multiplying the loaves during their distribution. S. Dominic and S. Francis imitated Christ in this matter. When in the General Chapter of the Friars Minor there was nothing to eat, they being full of faith, said, “Let us go and pray to Almighty God, who satisfied five thousand men besides women and children in the desert. His power and His mercy are no less now than they were then, that we should despair of His goodness.” They continued in prayer until they were assured concerning the Divine will. Then at the hour of dinner S. Francis bade the brethren sit down in the refectory. This done, they see enter twenty young men of noble appearance, girded, and prepared for service. These supplied bread, wine, and every kind of needful refreshment to the company, in number five hundred. When dinner was ended they bowed and saluted the brethren, and went out of the refectory two by two, to the admiration of the brethren, who praised God for His marvellous care and providence. (See Luke Wadding’s *Annals of the Friars Minor*, A.C. 1219, num. 11.) S. Dominic did the same thing at Rome at S. Sixtus’. When there was no food in the house he commanded the brethren to sit down to the table, and blessed it. Then lo, there came in two angels, having the appearance of beautiful youths, who placed before each one of the hundred brethren a very white loaf. Then they bowed their heads, and departed. (See the *Life of Dominic*, 3, c. 4.) I have visited and venerated the place at Rome where this was done, and seen a painting of it.

Ver. 15.—*That they might take Him, &c., i.e.,* the king Messiah, who, the Jews thought, would give them abundance of corn, wine and oil, gold and silver. This was why they wished to make Him a king, not for His advantage, but their own. Such is the Messiah, whom the foolish Jews expect even now, one like Solomon, to give them riches and plenty.

Ver. 21.—*They wished therefore, &c.* They wished Him, now that they recognised Him, whom they had before taken for a spectre, and been affrighted at. *And immediately, i.e.,* by the power and virtue of Christ’s presence, *the ship was at the land.* As Nonnus says, “By the Divine impulse the ship of her own accord touched at the distant port, as it were a soul with wings.” This land was *Genesar*, as S. Matthew

But S. Chrysostom thinks they said these words out of gluttony, because they were again hungering after the loaves of Christ, with which they had been fed. That they asked what were the works of God, with which Christ wished them to feed their souls, not because they intended to do them, but because they would gain His good-will, and so invite Him to renew the multiplication of the loaves.

More correctly, S. Augustine and others think that the Jews spoke with a serious desire of doing these works. For many among them being stirred up by the doctrine of Christ, and stimulated by this miracle of the loaves, were desirous of salvation. Therefore they ask Christ what works they ought to work, by which they may obtain of God that enduring Food, which would nourish their souls, and bring them to eternal life. And Jesus answers sincerely their sincere question, and teaches them what were the works of God. This He would not have done, if they had not been in earnest.

They called then *the works of God*, not only those which were pleasing to God, nor those which are the food of the soul, nourishing it to eternal life, as Leontius thinks. For they knew by the Law of Moses what works were pleasing to God. But by *the works of God* they mean those which He especially appointed and sanctioned by Jesus, whom He sealed, that by them they might obtain that spiritual Food of which Jesus preached, which nourishes us, and brings us to eternal life. For when they had heard that this was the Food of life eternal, and that God had sealed Christ that He might give this Food, they rightly call *the works of God* those which it was necessary to work in order to obtain this Food. And what they were they ask of Jesus, not doubting that He who had been so powerful and liberal in nourishing their bodies, could be equally, or rather, more powerful and liberal, in teaching them what it was, and supplying the Food of the Soul.

Ver. 29.—*Jesus answered, &c.* Believe, *i.e.,* in Myself, Who by so many arguments and miracles have proved that I am the Messiah sent by God. For the sake of modesty He speaks in the third person. As though He said, “That work by which ye will obtain Food from God to nourish the soul unto everlasting life, is to believe in Me. For I bestow this Food upon those who believe in Me. For I Myself am this Food.” This He says (verse 35).

That ye may believe, and believing, may obey Me, and observe My law and doctrine, and fulfil it indeed. Under the term *faith*, as a root, Christ and Paul understand all the works of charity, penance, temperance, and all other virtues which faith-stirs up and generates. Wherefore Theophylact says, “Faith assuredly is a holy and perfect work, and satisfies those who possess it. For diligent faith leads to every good work, and good works preserve faith. For works are dead without faith, and faith is dead without works.”

Ver. 30.—*They said, &c., i.e.,* those of the crowd who were bolder than the

anointed (for He who was anointed was signed), and denoted by the word signing, that He was formed as to His nature after the form of the Father, so to speak, that He might appear to say, 'It is not difficult for Me to bestow upon you the enduring Food, by which ye may be brought to the unspeakable delights of eternal life.' For the Son is the *character* of the *Hypostasis* of God the Father: and the *character* by which He has been signed by the Father is nothing else but the very form and substance of the Godhead." Thus Cyril: so too, S. Paul (Heb. i. 3), "Who being the splendour of His glory, and the *character* of His substance." Whence S. Gregory Nazianzen speaks thus of the glory of the Son (*Orat.* 42), "He is the Fountain of life and immortality; He is the expression," that is, the similitude, the seal, "of the Archetype: He is the immovable Seal," that which is not altered, or changed to any other form: "He is the Image in all respects like: He is the *Term* and Reason (Greek, *ὄζος καὶ λόγος*) of the Father." These two last expressions Nicetas takes as similar in meaning, that the Son is the Word of God the Father, *i.e.*, the *definition*, the *demonstration*. For as a definition demonstrates that which it defines, so does the Son *demonstrate*, and as it were *define* the Father. Thus Nicetas.

2. S. Hilary (*lib.* 8, *de Trin.*) more correctly and appositely; The Father, he saith, hath sealed the Son, not in the Divinity, by communicating to Him His own Godhead, but in the Humanity, since He hath united it to the Word, and hath communicated to it the Divinity of the Word. For a seal, he says, is wont to be impressed upon a different substance, which is called the impression. So the Humanity is sealed by the Divinity of the Son. So also Augustine: and from him Toletus saith, "Because the Son, who is the image and *character* of the Father is united to the Humanity, therefore the Humanity is said to have the seal and *character* of the Father."

3. S. Chrysostom and many others say, The Father hath sealed the Son, *i.e.*, by the voice from heaven at His baptism, *This is My Beloved Son*. He showed and demonstrated by His miracles, as seals, that He was His very Son. And He confirmed Him as the promised Messiah, who was able to impart convenient Food to all who desired eternal life. It comes to the same meaning if you interpret *sealed* to mean *gave authority*, because we are wont by impressing a seal to give credit and authenticity to letters.

This sense is easy and plain, but the second meaning is more solid and sublime. This third meaning flows from the second, and completes and perfects it. For the Father by His own voice and miracles, which are as it were His seals, has testified to man that He has sealed the Humanity of Jesus with the Divinity of the Word, and has impressed upon it the *form* of His own Divinity, that is, has testified that this Man Jesus is true God, and the Son of God, so that He may give and gain for Him among men, authority to teach, to enact laws, and to found a new Church. Wherefore the Gloss says, *He hath sealed, i.e.*, He hath set Him apart from others by His own sign."

Ver. 28.—*They said*, &c. Cyril thinks that the Jews asked this from arrogance, as being angry with Christ because He would have reproved them as being careless about their souls. As though they said, "Thou reprovest us for seeking after earthly bread and despising the Food of the soul. Tell us then what new work of God Thou affordest, by which we may please God and feed our souls, in addition to those works which Moses gave us to do, and wrote in the Pentateuch."

called it (xiv. 34), or *Genesareth*, as S. Mark (vi. 53). The ancient name was Cenereth, from the city so called, which was near Capharnaum. From this place the whole sea of Galilee was called the Lake of Cenereth, or Genesareth. Moreover the city of Capharnaum was situated in this land of Genesareth, to which, John says expressly, Jesus sailed with His disciples (vi. 17, 24, 25). Here was uttered His prolonged discourse concerning heavenly bread and the Eucharist. For the 60th verse says expressly, *These things He spake, teaching in the synagogue in Capharnaum*.

Observe the expression, *and immediately*. From this it follows that Christ caused this ship to fly in a moment to the harbour of the city of Capharnaum. Thus it sped eight or nine miles in one moment. For this was the distance between Bethsaida and Capharnaum. For the disciples in sailing from the place where Christ fed the five thousand which was midway between Bethsaida and Tiberias, had gone twenty-five or thirty furlongs, or four or five miles (see ver. 19), and were about, or a little past Bethsaida, when Jesus, walking upon the sea came to them, and entering into the ship, caused it to fly from that spot, as it were, in a moment, and land at Capharnaum. Thus He caused the ship to traverse eight or nine miles, as it were, in a moment. Learn from this to accomplish all thine actions with Christ, having Christ for thy leader and guide. With Him thou wilt do great things, without Him nothing. Thus S. Peter, though he toiled all night, without Christ, caught no fish: but as soon as He came and bade him let down the nets, he caught an immense multitude of fishes. Therefore as Nazianzen says in his Poems, "Happy is the man who buys Christ with all that he has."

Ver. 22.—*The next day, &c., across the sea*, understand, *in respect of the disciples*, who had sailed to the other side of the lake. The meaning is,—The day after that on which Christ had fed the five thousand, the multitude who had been thus fed continuing in that place across the sea, when they knew that there was only one boat there, in which the disciples had embarked alone, Jesus being left on the land—*they sought Jesus*, must be understood. For they did not know that He had walked on the sea by night, and joined the ship.

Ver. 23.—*But there came, &c.* We can see from this verse that the place where Christ multiplied the loaves was near Tiberias, and therefore that those who sailed from thence to Bethsaida and Capharnaum must have sailed past Tiberias. The meaning is, the report of the miracle being spread abroad, many both from other places as well as Tiberias, came to the place where the miracle was wrought, that they might see and hear Jesus who had done such great things.

Ver. 25.—*And when they had found Him . . . across the sea*, that is to say in the synagogue of Capharnaum, as is plain from verse 59. *When*, and how *camest Thou hither?* "For we know that yesterday Thy disciples went into

the ship by themselves at the desert of Bethsaida, and that Thou remainedst there on the land." They did not know that Jesus had walked upon the sea in the middle of the night.

Ver. 26.—*Jesus answered*, &c. Through modesty He did not answer their question directly, lest He should be forced to say that He had come walking upon the sea. He gave a reply therefore, which had more direct concern for His questioners, namely, that they were seeking food for their bodies rather than for their souls. "Ye ask Me, not because ye saw the miracles by means of which I labour to teach you faith and repentance, and the other evangelical virtues, by which ye may arrive at everlasting life. *Ye seek Me*, not that ye may receive of Me the food of the soul, *but because ye did eat of the loaves*, which I miraculously multiplied, and which I made pleasant to your taste, in order that ye may again have a like experience." For many are the lovers of the loaves and fishes rather than of Christ and eternal salvation. For the carnal have a taste only for carnal things, because they do not receive spiritual things.

Ver. 27.—*Labour not*, &c. *Labour*: Greek, *ἐζυγάσθητε*, *i.e.*, strive with zeal and labour and sedulous care to get food, not that of the body which perisheth, but of the soul which perisheth not. Wherefore the Arabic translates, *labour not on account of the food which perisheth, but on account of the food which endureth unto eternal life*. As Euthymius says, "Labour with the whole mind, with all your care continually. He does not command to labour for the food of the soul only, but He admonished them to care for the food of the body by the way, but for that of the soul with their whole heart."

Christ rises and draws the multitude from that corporeal bread with which a little while before He had fed them in the desert, to the far better, and far more needful spiritual bread. As though He had said, "I have given you barley bread without any labour of yours, but work ye, and labour with all your might, that Ye may obtain spiritual bread, to nourish you, and bring you to everlasting life." In like manner, from the water of the well He led the Samaritan woman to spiritual water, that He might teach His faithful followers, and especially Priests and Religious, to do the same, so that in their colloquies they may lead the people from corporeal to spiritual things. Wherefore from this saying of Christ Cyril rightly says, "We must have no care for the flesh, but we must watch for things that are needful for eternity. For he who follows after bodily pleasures differs in no respect from the beasts, but he who cleaves to nature, and leads his life according to the spiritual law, and is wholly given up to those things which are given us by God, and prepare our way for the things above, such a one seems to me to know himself, nor to be ignorant that he is a reasonable being, made in the image of his Creator."

You will ask, what is that food enduring unto eternal life, which Christ bids us work for that we may gain it? The heretics called Massalians, or Euchites, *i.e.*, Prayers, thought that it was prayer. As though Christ said, "Do not work with your hands, because work of the hands perisheth, but alway pray to God in your hearts because prayer is the food of the spirit, and remaineth for ever. These heretics said that we should not labour with our hands, but should pray always. See S. Chrysostom on this

passage. But this is a heresy which S. Paul condemns (2 Thess. iii. 10), saying, "If any one will not work, neither let him eat."

I say then that this food which abideth is faith, charity, grace, good works, even all things which lead us to life everlasting, and especially the Eucharist, as we shall see in verse 54. So Maldonatus, Bellarmine, and others. For gradually does Christ ascend from minor and common things to those which are greater and of the highest importance, such as the Eucharist. As S. Augustine saith, "To believe in Him is to eat the food which endureth unto life eternal. Why do you make ready your teeth and organs of digestion? Believe, and thou hast eaten."

Secondly, more appositely, properly and precisely, this spiritual food is the Eucharist, as Christ fully explains (verse 54). For He first generally (*in genere*), in the way of a proposition, speaks of this food as *heavenly, and enduring unto eternal life*. By and by in verse 35, He particularizes, determining what this food is, and asserts that it is He Himself. *I am the Bread of Life*. At length, in the 54th and following verses, He clearly unfolds the whole matter, and says that His Flesh and Blood in the Eucharist is this Bread and this Food. *Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. And, My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed*. For in the space of a year and a half, just before His death, He was about to constitute the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and in it to give us His own Flesh and Blood, as the spiritual meat and drink of the soul. But here in those intermediate verses He frequently exhorts to faith, because faith is a prime requisite in the Eucharist.

The meaning then is, Do the works of faith, believe in Me, give credit to My words, so shall ye seek, and shall indeed obtain the food of the Eucharist, which shall not only nourish your souls, but bring them to eternal life. For Christ distinguishes the work of faith from the food of the Eucharist, which was to be obtained by the work of faith; as the means is distinguished from the end to which it leads. Wherefore by and by, when the Jews ask about the work, that is, the way and the means by which they might gain this Bread, Christ answers (verse 29), *This is the work of God, that ye should believe in Him whom He hath sent*. So Theophylact says, "He calls the food which abideth the mystical reception of the Flesh of the Lord." And Rupertus, "He that endureth unto life eternal, that is, He who is eaten in this mortal life, is profitable to this end, that He should give everlasting life to the world"

For Him hath God the Father sealed. God, Greek, *ὁ Θεός*, the Heavenly Father, who is the Most High God. *Signed*, (Vulg.), Greek, *ἐσφραγίσαι*, *sealed*. This *signing*, or *sealing* of Christ, is threefold, the first of which is the cause of the second, the second of the third. The first is of Christ's Divinity, the second and third of His Humanity. In the first place then, Cyril thus expounds (*lib. 3, c. 29*), "To be signed is put for to be