

SHARING IS CARING

JOHN 6:1-15



Today, and for the next four Sundays, we read from the famous bread of life chapter in the Gospel of John (6:1-69). Today's text is John's account of the feeding of at least five thousand people.

Jesus is on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The people have gathered because they have seen him work a healing miracle or "sign", as John likes to call such miracles. Jesus retreats with his disciples to a mountain.

When Jesus sees the crowd approaching, he senses that they are hungry and asks Philip where they could buy food. He is testing Philip. Jesus knows exactly what he is going to do, but he wants to see if Philip knows. Philip does not know, nor does the other disciple, Andrew. They fail to understand that Jesus is the one who will satisfy the people's hunger.

Philip and Andrew try to come up with practical but conventional solutions. There are five thousand men present, not counting women and children. According to Philip, there isn't enough money to feed such a crowd. All Andrew can come up with are the five loaves and two small fish that are offered by a little boy. Conventional solutions will not feed the people; only Jesus can feed them. Jesus then works the miracle.

Notice something very important in John's account. It is Jesus himself who shares the food with the people, not the disciples. He is the source of the gift for these hungry people. The miracle produces so much food that twelve baskets of leftovers are gathered.

As always, the people are ecstatic about the miracle. They identify Jesus as a prophet and want to make him king. But Jesus is cautious about such enthusiasm based on his miracles or signs. He is truly a king, though not in the way the people think. His response is to withdraw by himself to the mountain. He will not be their earthly kind of king. ■

DO

Listen carefully to the words of consecration at Mass, during which the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of our saviour.

SAY

"Lord, help me to realise that we are not solitary beings but are called into relationship with you and with one another. Amen."

LEARN

In Jesus, God's power is at work.

Individualism is not a Christian value.

Jesus is the bread of life, who satisfies our deepest needs.

For the Christian, power and authority are about service.

PRAY

Pray for a deeper understanding of the gift of the Eucharist. Ask the Lord to increase your faith.

REFLECT

Our culture today places huge emphasis on the individual. There's a "rugged individualism" type of mentality around. We're inclined to focus solely or mainly on our own needs, our individual rights, our individual entitlements. Think of how some people have refused to respect the advice of health officials during the COVID-19 lockdown, how they put their own selfish needs above the welfare of the community.

The same can apply to our religion. We can reduce our religious practice to a private affair, as if it has nothing to do with our obligations to our sisters and brothers.

This blindness in our culture is the opposite of Jesus' vision of things. Jesus was totally other-centred. Food, friendship and togetherness were at the heart of his ministry. He had compassion for those who were hungry, as today's Gospel shows. The meal practice of Jesus and our celebration of the Eucharist tell us that we are a community first, that we belong together.

The feeding of the five thousand may have been due to some miraculous multiplying of food. But the real miracle may have been far simpler. It may have been that, even though the amount of food appeared small, there was sufficient for everybody when everybody shared. By his willingness to share what he had, the little boy in the Gospel story encouraged others in the crowd to share what they had. His display of generosity inspired those around him to be generous also. And when everybody shared what they had, there was more than enough to go around.

Our world produces enough food to feed everybody adequately. Our planet generates enough wealth to ensure that everyone has a decent standard of living. If only we were better at sharing.

The Eucharist is a foretaste of the heavenly feast in which we hope to share. It's a reminder that everything we have is given to us as a gift. As the little boy demonstrated, if we rely on each other, if we are willing to share, if we have Jesus' vision, then we will not only survive but thrive. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

God is in his holy place,
God who unites those who dwell in his
house;
he himself gives might and strength to his
people.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing has firm foundation,
nothing is holy,
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us
and grant that, with you as our ruler and
guide,
we may use the good things that pass
in such a way as to hold fast even now
to those that ever endure.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

2 Kings 4:42-44

A reading from the second book of Kings.

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing
Elisha, the man of God, bread from the first-
fruits, twenty barley loaves and fresh grain in
the ear. "Give it to the people to eat," Elisha
said. But his servant replied, "How can I
serve this to a hundred men?" "Give it to the
people to eat" he insisted "for the Lord says
this, 'They will eat and have some left over.'"
He served them; they ate and had some over,
as the Lord had said.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 144

Response:

You open wide your hand, O Lord,
and grant our desires.

- All your creatures shall thank you,
O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their
blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your
reign
and declare your might, O God. (R.)

- The eyes of all creatures look to you
and you give them their food in due time.
You open wide your hand,
grant the desires of all who live. (R.)

- The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts. (R.)

SECOND READING Ephesians 4:1-6

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Ephesians.

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to
lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear
with one another charitably, in complete
selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all
you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit
by the peace that binds you together. There
is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all
called into one and the same hope when you
were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one
baptism, and one God who is Father of all,
through all and within all.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are life:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 6:1-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea
of Galilee – or of Tiberias – and a large
crowd followed him, impressed by the signs
he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed
the hillside, and sat down there with his
disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish
feast of Passover.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds
approaching and said to Philip, "Where can
we buy some bread for these people to eat?"
He only said this to test Philip; he himself
knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip
answered, "Two hundred denarii would only
buy enough to give them a small piece each."
One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's
brother, said, "There is a small boy here with
five barley loaves and two fish; but what is
that between so many?" Jesus said to them,
"Make the people sit down." There was
plenty of grass there, and as many as five
thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the
loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all
who were sitting ready; he then did the same
with the fish, giving out as much as was
wanted. When they had eaten enough he said
to the disciples, "Pick up the pieces left over,
so that nothing gets wasted." So they picked
them up, and filled twelve hampers with
scraps left over from the meal of five barley
loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he
had given, said, "This really is the prophet
who is to come into the world." Jesus, who
could see they were about to come and take
him by force and make him king, escaped
back to the hills by himself.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings
which we bring from the abundance of your
gifts,
that through the powerful working of your
grace
these most sacred mysteries may sanctify our
present way of life
and lead us to eternal gladness.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine
Sacrament,
the perpetual memorial of the Passion of
your Son;
grant, we pray, that this gift,
which he himself gave us with love beyond
all telling,
may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

