



LIVING THE GOSPEL

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time August 2, 2026

Theme: "They all ate and were satisfied."

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: Almighty Father, gifts without measure flow from your goodness to bring us your peace. Our life is your gift. Guide our life's journey, for only your love makes us whole. Keep us strong in your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." ¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." ¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. ¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Gospel Focus

The multiplication of loaves and fishes is one of the greatest miracles of Jesus, shared in some form or the other in all of the gospels, and it is also one of the most richly symbolic. The book of Isaiah proclaims in the first reading that all can come to God and be fed, "without paying and without cost." Jesus here begins to fulfil this passage and offers a sign that points to a greater reality. While Jesus' ability to feed the crowd is incredible, it is not the end in itself. Jesus clearly did not end world hunger (that task is on *our* to-do list) but he did come to offer us food nonetheless-his own body and blood in the Eucharist. In this miracle, Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave the bread that feeds our souls. The multiplication of loaves and fishes is a sign of the great abundance that God wishes to offer us-nourishment such that we will never hunger for anything else.

Gospel Reflection

No one really knows the precise number of hungry people in our world, but the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates it to be 925 million—that's approximately one of every seven people.

Hunger was no stranger during the days of Isaiah and Jesus as well. In the first reading, Isaiah voices the dream of returning exiles. With their pitiful resources, they long for all to be able to eat well, without having to pay a cent. No one would die of thirst or malnutrition. In the gospel, Jesus enacts God's promise to fill the hungry with good food, as he feeds the crowd of thousands. This is not only a heartfelt compassion, but it is also a politically subversive action. In Jesus' day, as now, food is about power. The rich who had control of land and the means of food production and distribution, who comprised about 2-3 percent of the people, were the ones who ate well and plentiful. The rest struggled daily to feed themselves and their children. Taxes, pestilence, and drought often ate up their reserves and left them in the brink of starvation.

In today's world, there is easily enough food for everyone, and then some. But not all have enough land to grow food or sufficient income to purchase it. In the gospel, Jesus' disciples presume that there is enough food for everyone, but they figure it is someone else's responsibilities to provide it. They want to send everyone off to buy their own food, thinking that everyone has money and that the surrounding villages have the resources to feed the multitude. Jesus directs them away from an impulse toward self-sufficiency to a solution that depends on remaining in community and pooling and redistributing their resources. In a eucharistic action, he transform all that they have, and there is enough.

At the end of the episode, Matthew's notice that the count of five thousand did not include the women and children is a reminder that children and their mothers are the ones who are hardest hit by hunger. Even when women make sure their husbands and children are fed before they themselves eat, some five million children die every year because of undernutrition.

The gospel today invites us to resist the temptation to consider it someone else's responsibility to address the world's hunger. When we gather at Eucharist, we not only give thanks for God's gifts received freely and abundantly, but together we seek to understand the causes of hunger and redouble our efforts to galvanize the church's energies toward aiding peoples and nations to take the drastic measures needed.

The opening verses of today's gospel remind us that such actions provoke opposition from those who benefit from the unequal distribution. On the heels of the execution of John, Jesus fed the crowds, knowing he could be the next victim of Rome. Was it because he was counting the women and children who would otherwise perish?

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Isaiah 55:1-3

¹ "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

² Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. ³ Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

Responsorial Reading — Psalms 145:8-9,15-16,17-18

R: The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works. **(R)**

The eyes of all look hopefully to you, and you give them their food in due season;
you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. **(R)**

The LORD is just in all his ways and holy in all his works.
The LORD is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. **(R)**

Second Reading — Romans 8:35, 37-39

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1329. The Lord's Supper, because of its connection with the supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his Passion and because it anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem.(Cf. 1 Cor 11:20; Rev 19:9) *Breaking of Bread*, because Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread,(Cf. Mt 14:19; 15:36; Mk 8:6, 19) above all at the Last Supper.(Cf. Mt 26:26; 1 Cor 11:24) It is by this action that his disciples will recognize him after his Resurrection,(Cf. Lk 24:13-35) and it is this expression that the first Christians will use to designate their Eucharistic assemblies;(Cf. Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11) by doing so they signified that all who eat the one broken bread, Christ, enter into communion with him and form but one body in him.(Cf. 1 Cor 10:16-17)

The *Eucharistic assembly (synaxis)*, because the Eucharist is celebrated amid the assembly of the faithful, the visible expression of the Church.(Cf. 1 Cor 11:17-34)

1335. The miracles of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessing, breaks and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigure the superabundance of this unique bread of his Eucharist.(Cf. Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39) The sign of water turned into wine at Cana already announces the Hour of Jesus' glorification. It makes manifest the fulfillment of the wedding feast in the Father's kingdom, where the faithful will drink the new wine that has become the Blood of Christ.(Cf. Jn 2:11; Mk 14:25)

Sharing and Discussion

- 1) Jesus is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and great in compassion. Is there a price to be paid for being like Jesus? Are you willing to pay the price?
- 2) The reaction of Jesus and the disciples to the hungry crowd were different. What made the difference?
- 3) What lessons can you learn from this gospel?

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Loving God, you fed the hungry crowds and you fed us with yourself. Hear our prayers today and answer them according to your will, not ours. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

Facilitator: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our "Living the Gospel" Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God's Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.

Resuming on Saturday the 15th of August

Time - 9.30 – 11.00 am

Venue: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information or to RSVP, please contact;

Mary Bay - 96965049 (marybay2468@gmail.com)

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Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

- 1) Gospel notes taken from the Navarre Bible
- 2) Gospel reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sunday and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.
- 3) CCC references are taken from Catechism of the Catholic Church