



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**17th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 28 2024**

Theme: "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!"

Gathering Prayer

All: 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, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: John 6:1-15

¹ After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² And a multitude followed him, because they saw the signs which he did on those who were diseased. ³ Jesus went up on the mountain, and there sat down with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵ Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a multitude was coming to him, Jesus said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶ This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are they among so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place; so the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost." ¹³ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign which he had done, they said, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!" ¹⁵ Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Gospel Focus

This is a story that obviously foreshadows the Eucharist, and it is also a story about finding abundance where scarcity seems to reign. A common take on this story is that the food was there all along, but the crowd refused to share out of fear that it would not

be enough. Only when they saw the boy's generosity were others inspired to share what they had, too, and as loaves were passed more pockets were opened until there was more than enough. This read of the story does not mean to diminish this as a miracle but rather to point out that God changes the world, Jesus feeds us through each other. When Jesus is present, abundance is there. When Jesus us with us, we will find we have everything we need.

Gospel Reflection

One sixth of the planet's population suffers from severe hunger. Not surprisingly, the hardest hit are those from the developing world: hundreds of millions of people are starving in some countries in Asia and Africa. However, developed countries are not immune, millions more go wanting in the richest countries of the world. Today's readings are both challenging and comforting in the light of this food crisis.

The readings tell of two extraordinary acts of feeding hungry crowds: one by Elisha and one by Jesus. In the first, a man brings twenty loaves of barley bread as "firstfruits" to Elisha. The setting is most likely a shrine, and the bread is intended to be offered to God or placed as showbread, to be eaten later by the temple functionaries. The offer of firstfruits, the best of the harvest, was a way to express gratitude to God, and asks God's blessing on the remainder. It is surprising when Elisha tells the man offering the bread to give it to the people to eat instead. Only an extraordinary situation of hunger would demand such an action. Elisha's servant does not object but worries that there will still not be enough to feed one hundred people. Quoting an unknown saying, Elisha insists there will be enough and even some left over. And there is.

Jesus faces five thousand hungry people. He and the disciples explore possible solutions. They could buy food, but where would they find a sufficient stock? Even if they could find it, they do not have enough money to purchase the amount needed. There is a boy with five loaves and two fish, but the disciples reason, "What good are these for so many?" They are fixated on the enormity of need and the scarcity of resources.

At Jesus' urging, they entrust the boy's loaves and fishes to him. He instructs them to invite the people into a position of trust and receptivity to God's gracious care. Reclining on the grass is evocative of Psalm 23, which expresses trust in God, who leads the people to green pastures and provides for all their needs. Taking the loaves and giving thanks, Jesus rejoices in the abundance that God has given and distributes the bread to all until they are satisfied. He then directs the disciples to gather the leftovers, which fill twelve baskets.

Both readings urges us to take extraordinary actions to meet an urgent need. Global efforts to eradicate hunger can begin with one courageous boy who is willing to relinquish his few loaves and fishes, or one man making an offering to God, willing to let his gift be redirected to the people and to trust that in God's hands, there will be enough for all. Jesus reorients his disciples away from the inscrutable problem of scarcity and instead give thanks for the abundance of God's provision. The resources to feed all, and for all to be satisfied, lie within the community. Jesus' careful attention to the fragments left over also directs us to prevent wastefulness. Through such extraordinary responses to divine abundance, God is able to "satisfy the desire of every living thing" (Ps 145:16).

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — 2 Kings 4:42-44

⁴² A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, "Give to the men, that they may eat." ⁴³ But his servant said, "How am I to set this before a hundred men?" So he repeated, "Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and have some left.'" ⁴⁴ So he set it before them. And they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

Responsorial Psalm — Ps 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18

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

Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord, and let your faithful ones bless you. Let them discourse of the glory of our kingdom and speak of your might. **(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 — Ephesians 4:1-6

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

439. Many Jews and even certain Gentiles who shared their hope recognized in Jesus the fundamental attributes of the messianic "Son of David", promised by God to Israel.(Cf Mt 2:2; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9.15) Jesus accepted his rightful title of Messiah, though with some reserve because it was understood by some of his contemporaries in too human a sense, as essentially political.(Cf. Jn 4:25-26; 6:15; 11:27; Mt 22:41-46; Lk 24:21)

549. By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness and death,(Cf. Jn 6:5-15; Lk 19:8; Mt 11:5) Jesus performed messianic signs. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below,(Cf. Lk 12 13-14; Jn 18:36) but to free men from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God's sons and causes all forms of human bondage.(Cf. Jn 8:34-36)

559. How will Jerusalem welcome her Messiah? Although Jesus had always refused popular attempts to make him king, he chooses the time and prepares the details for his messianic entry into the city of "his father David".(Lk 1:32; cf. Mt 21:1-11; Jn 6:15) Acclaimed as son of David, as the one who brings salvation (*Hosanna* means "Save!" or "Give salvation!"), the "King of glory" enters his City "riding on an ass".(Ps 24:7-10; Zech 9:9) Jesus conquers the Daughter of Zion, a figure of his Church, neither by ruse nor by violence, but by the humility that bears witness to the truth.(Cf. Jn 18:37) And so the subjects of his kingdom on that day are children and God's poor, who acclaim

him as had the angels when they announced him to the shepherds.(Cf. Mt 21:15-16; cf. Ps 8:3; Lk 19:38; 2:14) Their acclamation, "Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord", (Cf. Ps 118:26) is taken up by the Church in the "*Sanctus*" of the Eucharistic liturgy that introduces the memorial of the Lord's Passover.

1338. The three synoptic Gospels and St. Paul have handed on to us the account of the institution of the Eucharist; St. John, for his part, reports the words of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum that prepare for the institution of the Eucharist: Christ calls himself the bread of life, come down from heaven.(Cf. Jn 6)

Sharing and Discussion

1. What is the difference between Philip's response and Andrew's? Who would you say are you more like?
2. Have you ever experienced something in your life that you would consider a miracle of abundance?
3. What are the lessons in this gospel passage that might be applicable to you?

Closing Prayer

All: Loving God, you empower each of us to proclaim the good news of your son, Jesus Christ. Receive our prayers that with faith and courage we might follow in the way of Jesus to everlasting life. Amen.

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

All: Amen

Living The Gospel bible study/sharing via Zoom resumes on the 14th of August 2024

Every Wednesday

Time: 8 – 9.30 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2760073734?pwd=cDRZR2JQMGRobVkwYTZ3ZF5L1BwZz09>

Meeting ID: 276 007 3734

Passcode: 1WordOfGod

All are welcome!

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References:

- (1) Gospel Notes are taken from The Navarre Bible
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