

Bread for the Life of the World

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

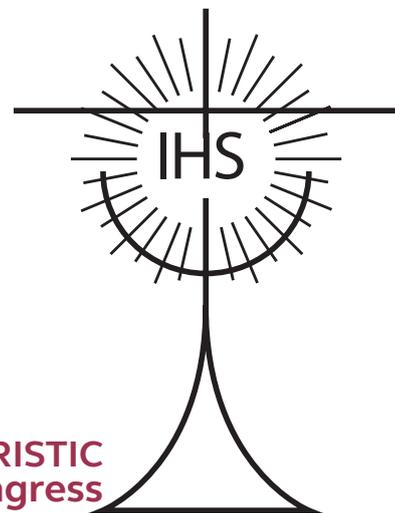
29 July 2018

Readings Summary

Reading 1	2 Kgs 4:42-44	<i>They will eat and have some left over.</i>
Psalm	Ps 144: 10-11. 15-18 r.16	<i>You open wide your hand, O Lord, and grant our desires.</i>
Reading 2	Eph 4:1-6	<i>One Body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.</i>
Gospel Acclamation	cf John 6:63.68	<i>Your words are spirit, Lord and they are life: you have the message of eternal life.</i>
	Luke 7:16	<i>A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people.</i>
Gospel	John 6:1-15	<i>Jesus gave out as much as was wanted to all who were sitting ready.</i>

Readings & Homily Notes

- The account of the Last Supper in John's Gospel does not include Christ sharing of his Body and Blood in bread and wine. Chapter 6 of the Gospel is where John places Jesus' teaching on the Eucharist. It is significant that this teaching is prepared by a feeding miracle.
- Like the accounts of similar miracles in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (e.g. Matthew 15:36) the structure imitates that of the Last Supper:
 - - Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out,
- A small point of difference with the other Gospel's is that Jesus is described as giving out the food directly to the crowd rather than having it first to his disciples.
- The people could respond to Jesus's feeding of them with the psalm response — You open wide your hands, Lord, and grant our desires. or as another translation puts it, you satisfy our desires which encompasses the sense of being fed to satisfaction.
- The short first reading from the 2nd Book of Kings is a clear example of where the action of the Gospel is pre-figured in First Reading. Just as Jesus takes barley loaves and feeds the crowd; so Elisha take barley loaves and distributes them to the people who eat and there is some left over.
- Underlying questions in John's chapter 6 are 'Who is Jesus?'. Is he the Messiah?', and 'What kind of Messiah is he?'. He is seen as the successor Elisha, Moses (18) and Elijah (19) but at the end of this week's passage he has to escape otherwise they will make him king.
- In concentration on Jesus' feeding of the crowd it is miss the reference to 'It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover'. John structures his gospel around the Jewish liturgical feasts and in his account of the Last Supper it is also described as before the Passover (John 13:1).



- In the Gospel reading there is an echo of the previous week's psalm 22 (The Lord is my shepherd). Jesus the shepherd leads the people near the waters of the Sea of Galilee and invites them to rest by sitting on the grass. Then he provides a banquet of bread and fish.
- Psalm 144, this week, introduces the theme of thanksgiving which is central to the Eucharist. Here, all living things give thanks to God because of what he has done and, in particular, feeds them. In the Gospel Christ feeds his people abundantly such that there are 12 baskets to be filled. Later in the chapter the significance of thanksgiving is emphasised by the reference to 'the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks'. (John 6:23, though the last clause is not found in all early sources and is omitted from the *Jerusalem Bible*.
 - A focus for Adoration can be thanksgiving for generous gifts we have been given.
- In the celebration of Mass all heaven and earth offers the sacrifice of praise to the Father through Christ. ((? Ref. Eph 4:6) This is most clearly expressed in the Preface, Sanctus and the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer. But it also a name (Eucharist) for the whole of the celebration and suggests a whole orientation of life - giving thanks. This suggests one of the reasons why Jesus escapes the crowd at the end of the passage when they identify prophet and king. To have one's needs satisfied is only part of the picture and the Second reading suggests another part — to live for others, 'a life worthy of your vocation'.

Homiletic Directory

CCC 1335: the miracle of the loaves and fishes prefigures the Eucharist

CCC 814-815, 949-959: sharing of gifts in the communion of the Church

Liturgical Material

Penitential Act

Lord Jesus, you feed us with your Body and Blood.

Lord Jesus, you call us into unity and hope.

Lord Jesus, you grant the desires of all who live.

Intercessions

For the unity of the Christian Church,
may it find hope and strength in one, Lord, one faith and one baptism.

For the poor and all who hunger,
may they be able to feed those they love with dignity.

Bulletin material

For the Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Love which conquers death. It is the Sacrament of the Covenant, pure Gift of Love for the reconciliation of all humanity. It is the gift of the Real Presence of Jesus The Redeemer, in the bread which is His Body given up for us, in the wine which is His Blood poured out for all. Thanks to the Eucharist, constantly renewed among all peoples of the world, Christ continues to build His church: He brings us together in praise and thanksgiving for salvation, in the communion which only infinite love can forge

St John Paul II, Homily World Youth Day, Paris 1997

Invitation to Personal Prayer & Reflection

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

Prayer over the Offerings, 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The prayers of the Mass are given for a Sunday and there is just a single cycle in contrast with the Lectionary which has 3-year cycle of readings. On the Sundays of Ordinary Time it is not intended that the prayers should match the readings, rather they offer rich themes about our relationship with God. However, this week's Prayer over the Offerings, which comes after the gifts of bread and wine have been brought to the altar and is prayed just before the Eucharistic Prayer, captures some of the themes of the Gospel. It is an expression of a common theme at this point in the Mass. We take the gifts of God's creation, grain and grape, and transform them to become bread and wine. We offer then to God so that they may be transformed to become the Body and Blood of Christ. In turn we receive this food and drink so that we may in turn be transformed to become more like Christ in this world and the next.

The language of the Missal not everyday language but seeks to speak 'sacrally' — to speak of holy things in a holy manner within the form of the liturgy. The language of prayer and devotion can be more personal. To help understand the prayer and make it one's own it can help to express it one's own language as part of a personal prayer life.