

Sunday Message

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 28 July 2024 • Psalter Week 1



After performing some healing miracles or "signs," as John calls them, Jesus retreats with his disciples to a mountain on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

But the people follow him, impressed by what they have seen him do. When Jesus sees them, he realises they are hungry and asks Philip where they could buy food. He is testing Philip. He knows exactly what he's going to do, but he wants to see if Philip knows. Philip does not, 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 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. And as Andrew points out, there clearly isn't enough food in the five loaves and two small fish offered by a little boy. Conventional solutions won't feed the people; only Jesus can. Jesus then works the miracle.

Notice something very important in John's account. It is Jesus 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 there are twelve baskets of leftovers. Jesus' command to gather up the leftovers and to waste nothing echoes the Exodus story. On the Exodus trek, Moses had commanded the people to do the same with the manna or miraculous bread from heaven given by God in the wilderness.

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." Of course, he is a king but not in the way the people think. His response is to withdraw by himself to the mountain. He will not be their kind of king. ■

REFLECT

For most of its history, popes and church leaders in their teaching and writing tended to focus on internal church affairs, issues to do with doctrine and discipline, rites and rules. The Church saw itself as standing apart from and in opposition to the world. But in 1891, Pope Leo XIII did something new - he wrote the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Of New Things). *Rerum Novarum* dealt with issues that didn't have to do with the internal life of the Church at all - but with the world outside the Church, the world where ordinary Catholics lived every day.

Remember what industrialised countries were like towards the end of the 19th century. Previous decades had seen rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, as millions of people moved from the countryside to the cities. It saw the growth of slums, and the emergence of a tiny massively wealthy industrial elite while the great majority endured miserable living and working conditions. Think of the world depicted so graphically by Charles Dickens, of Jim Larkin and the 1913 lockout in Dublin, of Karl Marx and the Communist Manifesto.

Leo XIII was an old man in 1891, but he was aware of developments in the world outside the Church and he didn't like it. And so in his encyclical, he advocated the right of workers to dignity, to a living wage and to form trade unions, and he condemned unrestricted capitalism. Leo's encyclical was praised by many but it was criticised too. The Church should stay out of politics, he was told; social and economic affairs had nothing to do with religion.

But the encyclical made its mark. Leo had started a trend, a tradition. It was the beginning of a whole new body of Church teaching, what has become known as Catholic social teaching. Popes since Leo have developed this teaching. In 1931, Pope Pius XI recommended that workers share in ownership, in profits. In 1963, John XXIII declared that developing countries should share in the rewards of industrialised societies. John Paul II denounced both Marxism and unbridled capitalism and warned against the all-consuming desire for profit and a destructive thirst for power. A word he loved to use was 'solidarity.' Pope Francis has repeatedly emphasised the

LEARN

The Eucharist must move us from church to world, thrust us out to the hungers of the human family, summon us to love of neighbour and action for justice.

Individualism runs contrary to the Eucharist.

DO

Learn more about Catholic social teaching. There's plenty of information on the internet and in any good library.

PRAY

Pray for all those who are hungry and oppressed. Pray for a more just world.



SAY

"Help me, Lord, to live every day what I celebrate in the Eucharist. Amen."

need to care for our endangered earth and speaks regularly about the plight of migrants and refugees.

Its social teaching has been described as the Church's hidden treasure because most people are not very familiar with it. While even non-Catholics are aware of what the Church says about sexual morality, most people, including Catholics, are not very familiar with what the Church says about social justice.

Jesus was moved with compassion for the hungry gathered before him. He was always full of compassion for the poor, the sick, the excluded, those on the margins. He said they would be the first in God's kingdom. The lesson is clear and it is the basis for Catholic social teaching: our world produces enough food to feed everybody adequately. Our planet generates enough wealth to ensure everyone has a decent standard of living. If only we were less selfish, if only, like the little boy in today's Gospel, we were better at sharing. ■

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,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

2 Kings 4:42-44

A reading from the second book of the 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 left over, as the Lord had
said.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 144 (145):10-11, 15-18

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, 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.
Through Christ our Lord.
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.

May the Lord, support us all the day long, until
the shadows lengthen,
and the evening comes, and the busy world is
hushed, and the fever of life is over,
and our work is done. Then in your mercy, grant
us a safe lodging and a holy rest,
and peace at the last.

Saint John Henry Newman