

Ἡ ΕΥΛΟΓΗΣΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΕΝΤΕ

Ἄρτων.

Χ̅Ϟ̅



Order for Liturgy of the Word

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Entrance Antiphon: Leader

O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me! You are my rescuer, my help; O Lord, do not delay. Ps 70(69): 2, 6

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Sisters and Brothers, God desires to converse with us through his Word. Let us bless him for his goodness. Blessed be God forever. **Response:** Blessed be God forever.

Introduction: Leader

We gather today to celebrate the Lord's Day. One with our sisters and brothers and the entire Church, we will listen to God's Word and join in prayer. As we prepare to hear of God's love poured out through Christ, let us acknowledge that He is the source of pardon and strength:

All: *The Confiteor*

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Leader: In acknowledgement and thanksgiving for God's mercy we offer our praise:

All: *The Gloria*

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men 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 the 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.

Leader: Let us pray:

Draw near to your servants, O Lord, and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness, that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide, you may restore what you have created and keep safe what you have restored. 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: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: 55: 1-3

Thus says the LORD: All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life. I will renew with you the everlasting covenant, the benefits assured to David. The word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 145: -9, 15-16, 17-18

R. (cf. 16) 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 hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

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

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

Second reading:

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans:

8:35, 37-39

Brothers and sisters: What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God

Gospel acclamation:

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Mt 4:4b

Gospel proclamation:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

14: 13-21

When Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their towns. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves." But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "Bring them here to me," and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over— twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children.

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

What we hear in the First Reading are three short poetic invitations which begin the last chapter of the Book of Consolation within the collections known as the Book of Isaiah. These sixteen chapters are made up of oracles, poems, foretelling of the future, and bold announcements to the people of Israel who are in captivity. The entire chapter is worth reading for our own consolations in our personal times of *unfreedom* and worry.

The Gospel for today opens with Jesus' hearing of the death of his cousin John, the account of which immediately precedes the verses for today. Jesus retires to a boat and heads across the water to a lonely place for obvious reasons. For further obvious reasons the crowds follow him.

For even further obvious reasons Jesus allows his space to be interrupted by the crowds and their sick. He extends himself into the crowd by taking bread and fish and blessing them for distribution. The crowd numbers over five thousand and Jesus gives the bread and fish to his early church-members for the feeding. When those who had eaten were full, there were still leftovers. Imagine that.

Each of the four gospels has at least one account of this miraculous bread-and-fish display. It is the only story from the public life of Jesus heard from all four writers, so it must be quite important to the message and purpose of Jesus.

This Gospel story seems to me to be about fragility: the crowd, the paucity of the bread/fish offering, the simple humanity of the disciples charged with the miraculous multiplications.

Jesus meets people where they are, in their truth. He meets them in a condition in which they wish they were not. Jesus uses the meaningful gestures of humanity to attract to the reality beyond words.

I would love, at least once, to grasp the depth of intensity in Christ's desire for being with us in our fragility. The fragility of each of us is embraced and blessed. We are the bread he blesses and we are how he looks upon the fragility around us and says, "You (like the meager fish and loaves) are more than enough!" It is not the meager resources we have that count, but what Jesus can do with these resources when we give all we have to him.

Larry Gillick, SJ.

*Take Lord, receive, all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding, my entire will.
All I have and hold you have given me.
To you Lord, I return it, everything is yours, do with it what you will.
Only your love and your grace, that is enough for me*

St. Ignatius Loyola, from the [Spiritual Exercises](#)

Having listened to God's word in these passages from Holy Scripture we now profess our faith in all that He has revealed:

All—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,
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.

Prayers of the Faithful—Leader

Introduction: Lord, you have given us bread from heaven and bestow daily blessings. Relying on your constant protection and never-failing care we offer our petitions:

Intentions:

For the Church: that we may welcome all who hunger for meaning and purpose into our assembly where they are nourished by the Word of God and the Bread of Life; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For the courage to trust: that we recognize that nothing can separate us from the love of God and learn to rely on him through all the challenges of life; we pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who work in the fields and pastures to bring food to our tables: that God will protect them, renew their hope, and make fruitful their labor; we pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For parents of children: that as the school year approaches they seek wisdom and guidance from God as they review their options to choose the best path to education; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are sick: that they look hopefully to God who is “near to all who call upon him” and know that neither anguish nor distress, persecution nor famine, can ever separate them from the love of Christ; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died: may their hunger be sated as they dine forever at the banquet with their Lord; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.



Prayer: We draw near to you, O Lord, and place our prayers before you that you “may restore what you have created and keep safe what you have restored”. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Leader: Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Leader: With the love of Christ, let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Leader: Communion Antiphon:

You have given us, O Lord, bread from heaven, endowed with all delights and sweetness in every taste. **Wis 16:20**

All—Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Leader: A Prayer After Spiritual Communion

Accompany with constant protection, O Lord, those you renew with these heavenly gifts and, in your never-failing care for them, make them worthy of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord. **Response:** Amen.

Blessing—making the sign of the cross:

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

Response: Amen.

Leader: Let us go in peace.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Closing Thoughts

I once heard a scholar, interviewed on a TV special about Jesus, refer to the feeding of the five thousand with the phrase “dinner and a show.” His point was, I think, to characterize Jesus' ministry as “meeting folks where they are.” And that is surely part of the meaning of the Gospel.

Responding in heartfelt compassion to the people's needs, Jesus healed them and fed them. But there are other dimensions to the account as well. Characterizing the Galilean seaside as a “desert” place surely evokes the memory of Israel in the wilderness and Jesus as a new Moses mediating manna for the wanderers invited into a *new Exodus*.

The similarity to the account in 2 Kings 4:24-44 about Elisha feeding one hundred with twenty loaves reminds us that a prophet greater than Elisha is here. And no one misses the parallel between Jesus' gestures —taking, blessing, and breaking the loaves and giving them to his disciples—and his actions at the Last Supper. What catches my attention this time is the role of the disciples. Told to feed the people, they think only of their own meager resources.

When they heed Jesus' command, “Bring them to me,” the people are abundantly fed. That reminds us disciples that our part in the mission does not depend on our own poor resources but on bringing others to the feeder and healer himself— Jesus.

Dennis Hamm, SJ

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Our Lord desires not only to bless us but to bless through us!

