

Sunday Summary

Matthew 14:13-21

In the narrative section (13:53–17:27) leading up to the discourse on the community (chap. 18), Matthew emphasizes the shaping of the disciples into the nucleus of the Church. The unbelief of Jesus' own people (13:54-58) and the pre-figuring of his own passion in the martyrdom of John the Baptist (14:1-12) form the setting for the feeding of the five thousand.

The emphasis of the event is not so much upon the miraculous nature of the feeding, for the usual reference to the astonishment of the disciples and crowd (12:23, 14:33) is absent, as it is upon the implied revelation of who Jesus is. For the early Church, the eucharistic significance of the feeding made it a central experience in the narratives of Jesus' ministry. It is the only miracle recorded in all four of the gospels (Mark 6:32-44; Luke. 9:10-17; John 6:1-13).

Weekly Reflection

In today's gospel, Jesus feeds thousands of people with five loaves of bread and two small fish. This story is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four gospels, showing its importance to the early Church that produced the New Testament.

Jesus blesses the food by giving thanks. In church we cry out "Amen!" as our liturgy thanks God on behalf of creation, humanity and the Church. In our lives we struggle to relearn the natural prayer of our childhood, when we woke each morning with wonder and gratitude in our hearts. Time may have dimmed the wonder; sorrow may have stifled the gratitude. Still our vocation as a priestly people is this: to praise God on behalf of all things.

In spirit, we come to Jesus' side in that green and peaceful pasture. We offer what we have. He gives thanks; he breaks it. He shares it among us. We eat and, oh, we are satisfied.



Food for Thought

- ❖ In Romans 9:1-5, what is Paul's prayer for his "own people"? When have you felt such passion for those you love?

Food for Thought

- ❖ Why do you think the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle story recorded in all four gospels? Why is it central to the life of Christ?

Bridges for Fridges

Recipe for Awareness



Begin with a moment of centering silence and quiet reflection, setting aside the concerns and agenda of the day.



① We come to an awareness of God's presence in our family.

"Dear God, who is present with our family now, and at all times and in all ways..."

Continue with:

② We express our gratitude for today's gifts from God.

*"Today I give thanks for..." or,
"Today, I am grateful for..."*

Pause again for another moment of centering silence and quiet reflection.

③ We come to an awareness of God's presence in our own experience.

*Silently contemplate the question:
"When have I acted from love?"*

*Silently contemplate the question:
"When have I acted from fear?"*

Based on your contemplation, create your intention to move forward as an expression of God's Love.

④ We plan and move forward with God.

"God, help me to manifest your presence today by..."

Invitations to Community

- Today's gospel, in which Jesus feeds his followers, is also a story of the Eucharist: the sacrament in which we who follow Jesus are amply fed. How have we experienced Jesus' power to feed us in the Eucharist? Praise God for satisfying our hungers through the gift of Jesus' bread.
- Jesus asks his disciples to feed those who are hungry. What hunger exists in our own community? What does our congregation do and give to the relief of that hunger? Pray for the hungry of the community, that we may be fed.

Suggestions for Families

As a family, make the commitment and arrange to volunteer time one night at a soup kitchen. Discuss the experience. Ask:

- What about it was what you were expecting?
- What about it was different than you expected?
- Would you like to continue on a regular basis?

Sharing information is perhaps the most tangible way that we can emulate Jesus' feeding of the 5000. Knowing about and contributing to a worthy cause is one thing, sharing your knowledge with others is another thing entirely. As a family, choose a local charity that fits with your shared goals and values. Then, not only contribute something of your own to it, but promote its good works and its needs to others.

Prayer Starter

Help me, Jesus, to see
your abundant power at
work in my life...

