

The Living Word

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

2 August 2026

First Reading Is 55:1-3

Hasten and eat.

Thus says the Lord:

Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty;
though you have no money, come!
Buy corn without money, and eat,
and, at no cost, wine and milk.
Why spend money on what is not bread,
your wages on what fails to satisfy?
Listen, listen to me and you will have
good things to eat
and rich food to enjoy.
Pay attention, come to me;
listen, and your soul will live.
With you I will make an everlasting covenant
out of the favours promised to David.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 144:8-9. 15-18. R. v.16

**(R.) The hand of the Lord feeds us:
he answers all our needs.**

1. The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. (R.)
2. 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.)
3. The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
call on him from their hearts. (R.)

Second Reading Rom 8:35. 37-39

No creature can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ.

No creature can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ. Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Mt 4:4

Alleluia, alleluia!

**No one lives on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from the
mouth of God.**

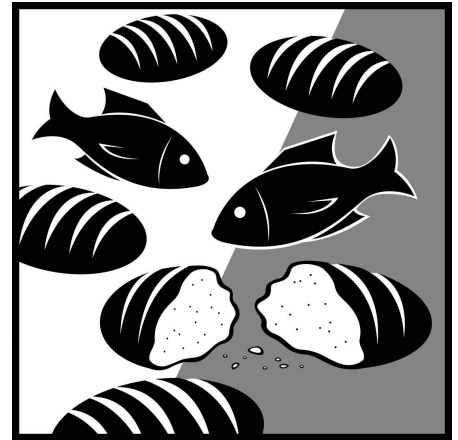
Alleluia!

Gospel Mt 14:13-21

They all ate and were satisfied.

When Jesus received the news of John the Baptist's death he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But the people heard of this and, leaving the towns, went after him on foot. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them and healed their sick.

When evening came, the disciples went to him and said, 'This is a lonely place, and the time has slipped by; so send the people away, and they can go to the villages to buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, 'There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves.' But they answered, 'All we have with us is five loaves and two fish.' 'Bring them here to me,' he said. He gave orders that the people were to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And breaking the loaves he handed them to his disciples who gave them to the crowds. They all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected the scraps remaining, twelve baskets full. Those who ate numbered about five thousand men, to say nothing of women and children.



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

Note the disciples' reaction to the plight of the hungry crowd: 'Send the people away so that they can buy.' The disciples have gone for the fix which puts no responsibility on them. They are willing to entrust the hungry crowd to market forces. Those with money can eat: those without, can't. For the disciples, money and commerce are the answers to hunger.

Jesus rejects that solution. 'There is no need for them to go; give them something to eat yourselves.' The solution to the hunger of that crowd was to give generously what little the disciples had. What they could have kept for themselves was to become gift. Once the disciples were in Jesus' frame of mind, the hunger of the crowd was satisfied. How did this come about? The answer lay in human cooperation with the impulse of Divine generosity which knows no limits. The story simply says that Jesus blessed and broke the loaves 'and handed them to his disciples who gave them to the crowd.' Jesus depended on the disciples to obey him: 'Give them something to eat yourselves'.

Jesus still looks with gut-wrenching compassion on those who are hungry in our own society and throughout the world. If we answer that market forces will suffice, Jesus will reject our answer as decisively as he rejected the answer of his earliest disciples. We have to take responsibility to share what we have, to be generous with what we have. After all, Jesus, Our Lord and Master, commands us: 'Give them something to eat yourselves'. Note how Jesus blessed those loaves and broke them before they were distributed, which reminds us of the words of Pedro Arrupe, former General of the Jesuits, 'Eucharist will never be complete so long as people still go hungry in the world.'

We could pause for a moment at Mass to ask: Who are those hungry people crowding in on us, and then pray that we may respond to them as our Lord commanded, so that the hungers of the crowd, and our hunger to really follow our Lord, will be satisfied.

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Mary MacKillop was born in Fitzroy, Melbourne, in 1842, the eldest child of Scottish immigrants. In 1861 she moved to the small town of Penola in South Australia, where she met Fr Julian Tenison Woods. Together they established Australia's first free Catholic school. In 1866 she co-founded Australia's first religious order, the Sisters of St Joseph, and took a vow of poverty. Soon there were 17 schools under her care, but Mary's refusal to abide by the rules of the Bishop in Adelaide led to her excommunication from the church. She was accepted back a year later and eventually shown respect by the Bishops for her work with the poor. Mary was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1995, as a result of a woman who was cured of leukaemia in 1961 after a group offered prayers to Sister Mary. She was canonised by Pope Benedict XVI on 17 October 2010 and is now known as St Mary of the Cross.



LOAVES AND FISH

How many words can you make from the letters in LOAVES AND FISH?

Wordsearch

Try to find these words:



baskets
boat
crowd
disciples
fish
Galilee
late
loaves
sick
thousand
towns
twelve

R	U	M	T	K	G	F	S	K	I	D	H	B	U	K	B	E
W	N	I	H	C	H	D	B	T	O	S	S	G	A	P	V	P
N	X	L	K	I	D	E	G	S	E	U	C	V	Z	L	G	M
W	N	E	R	S	B	Q	Y	E	C	K	M	W	E	E	O	C
F	J	W	F	N	V	G	S	L	V	T	S	W	S	I	T	W
D	J	I	H	L	T	T	C	P	B	R	T	A	C	M	R	P
E	S	E	V	X	A	F	J	I	C	M	Y	U	B	X	Z	Y
H	S	M	Y	M	O	L	Y	C	J	H	P	U	P	O	N	U
D	P	K	B	J	B	N	R	S	Q	W	L	S	W	K	L	E
G	A	L	I	L	E	E	A	I	F	R	O	T	N	Q	B	N
A	R	E	N	D	M	P	O	D	L	U	A	F	S	W	G	Z
S	W	D	C	I	M	N	I	T	E	C	V	U	K	E	O	R
J	F	D	E	T	A	L	U	D	Q	J	E	V	M	I	V	T
Z	Y	O	J	G	R	J	G	P	Y	D	S	F	Y	N	U	H
Z	P	L	O	D	L	C	R	O	W	D	E	A	L	Q	K	U
M	U	Y	U	J	X	Z	Y	D	G	Z	Y	C	A	S	X	O
Z	Z	T	H	O	U	S	A	N	D	T	T	I	M	P	I	F