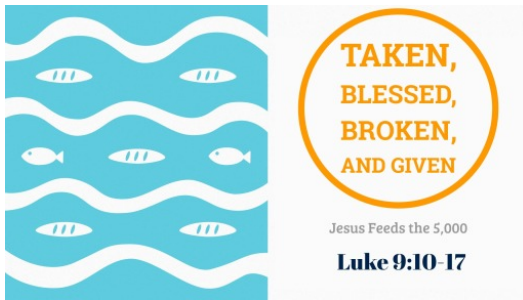


LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL

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THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

19th June 2022

Luke 9:10 *On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida.* ¹¹ When the crowds found out about it, they followed him; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured.

Luke 9:12 The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.” ¹³ But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” ¹⁴ For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” ¹⁵ They did so and made them all sit down. ¹⁶ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷ And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

COMMENTS

The multiplication of the loaves is a natural choice for Corpus Christi. This story is told no fewer than six times in the NT, twice in both Mark and Matthew, and once each in John and Luke. The key, when reading shared accounts, is to pay attention to what is distinctive to each one. In our case, two things stand out.

Firstly, Luke brings out the Eucharistic symbolism more strongly.

Secondly, he underscores the intermediary role of the twelve, as he looks ahead to their importance in the Acts. Overall, Luke is very attached to Elijah / Elisha symbolism which comes out in this story.

KIERAN O'MAHONY—tarsus.ie

We remember Jesus when we listen to the story of his life and his message in the Gospels. They were written specifically to preserve the message of Jesus and thus strengthen the faith and the will of his disciples to follow him.

We do not infer any doctrine from the Gospel narrative but we learn, above all, that the way Jesus was and acted should be a model and inspiration for the way we live. So we must listen to it with an attitude of disciples who wish to learn to think, feel, love and live like him.

JOSÉ A PAGOLA

The passage brings to mind the situation of migrants and asylum seekers across the world, people who experience hardship and often mistreatment at our borders. The Gospel leaves no doubt about our obligation to protect them, just as Jesus provided for the hungry crowds. Today's gospel also echoes the Eucharistic meal, with Jesus taking the bread, blessing it and having the disciples distribute it. With these words Luke is clearly marking the links between the Eucharist and practical care for all those in need.

No matter how little we think we have to give, God will provide beyond our imagining, but we are invited to take the first step. Think about how you can put more of your time or resources at the service of others, particularly those in crisis.

TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT - *Going Deeper*

COMMENT

This was a highly symbolic act on the part of Jesus because, not only does it echo the Old Testament miracle of the manna in the wilderness, it also indicates Jesus' desire to nourish his followers as they journey with him on the road of faith. The Eucharist is precisely that, and every time we gather for it we recognise that we are pilgrims in need of the sustenance that only God can give.

Reflection

When Jesus said 'do this in memory of me' it is clear that he was not only referring to his actions relating to the bread and wine. He was also asking his followers to live out this symbol of his life-giving love. This is made very clear in the fourth gospel where, instead of the Passover meal, John reports the Jesus knelt down and washed the feet of his disciples and afterwards told them that they must do the same.

The Eucharist as a sacrifice and a meal involves us not only in a prayerful ritual but also commits us to a way of relying to each other. If we are truly devoted to the Lord's presence in Holy Communion then we will also be devoted to his presence in the community in those who are most in need.

SEAN GOAN—*Let the Reader Understand, Year C*

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Jesus welcomes the crowd, taught them, and cured those in need of healing. Bring to mind the ways in which the story of Jesus and his message have brought you enlightenment, and healing.
2. The miracle is symbolic of the abundance of blessings coming to us from God through Jesus. How has your faith in Jesus been a source of nourishment to you? What blessings have you received through your faith?
3. Today we are invited to walk in the footsteps of Jesus by welcoming people affected by Covid, displaced by war, or struggling to make ends meet. Perhaps in the face of these difficulties you feel helpless. So did this disciples and yet Jesus said to them "You give them something to eat". They thought what had was insufficient but Jesus used the little they had to feed the crowd. Have you ever found that when you give the little you have to a situation, the results were beyond your expectations?

JOHN BYRNE—*Intercom*

So if it is you that are the Body of Christ and its members,
it's the mystery meaning you that has been placed on the Lord's table;
what you received is the mystery that means you.

It is to what you are that you reply Amen, and by so replying you express your assent.
What you hear is The Body of Christ.
and you answer Amen.
So be a member of the Body of Christ in order to make that Amen come true.

Saint Augustine Sermon 272

"The world has enough for every man's need, but not enough for every man's greed." Gandhi

Lord, often today we see pictures of hungry people,
- mothers with ghostly babies at their breasts,
- long lines of people outside food stores.

Like the disciples of Jesus, we say,
"Why can't they go to villages and farms round about them to find lodging and food?"

Now and then the thought comes to us that we should give them something to eat ourselves, but we quickly dismiss that as impractical. We find all kinds of excuses:

- we have no more than five loaves and two fish;
- are we to go ourselves and buy food for all these people?

Lord, your solution is really quite simple:
sit people down in small communities;
take whatever five loaves and two fish you have;
break the bread and hand it around to be distributed among the crowd.

Not only would all eat as much as they want, but when the remaining scraps are collected, we will fill many baskets.

Lord, it is an extraordinary thing:
if we complain about the little we have, we never have enough;
but if we take what we have, raise our eyes to heaven and say the blessing over it,
we have as much as we want, and even twelve baskets of scraps left over.

"People come to us looking for the bread of compassion and we give them the stone of advice."

A modern psychologist

Lord, so long as we look on people as objects of our attention,

saying to ourselves that when late afternoon comes we will send them away to the villages and farms round about to find lodging and food,

and that we don't have to give them something to eat from the five loaves and two fish we have,
we will never be true followers of Jesus.

Lord, have mercy.

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL