



OUR LADY OF THE LAKE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples of Jesus Christ.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
JULY 28, 2024

The Bread of Life: Feeding of Five Thousand

One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to Jesus, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?"

John 6:9

This weekend we hear Jesus' most-remembered miracle: multiplying and feeding the multitudes with five barley loaves and two fish, the simple gifts offered by a young person in the crowd following the Lord as he taught and healed on the hill at Tabgha. All four Gospel writers record this miracle moment in some fashion, so it clearly was a particular story for the early Church to tell.

In St. John's Gospel the miracle story forms the first part of what is known as Jesus' "Bread of Life discourse" as he reveals his divinity, but also the way he will maintain his presence with disciples after his death and resurrection. We will hear these passages on the Eucharist in St. John's Gospel over the next five Sundays.

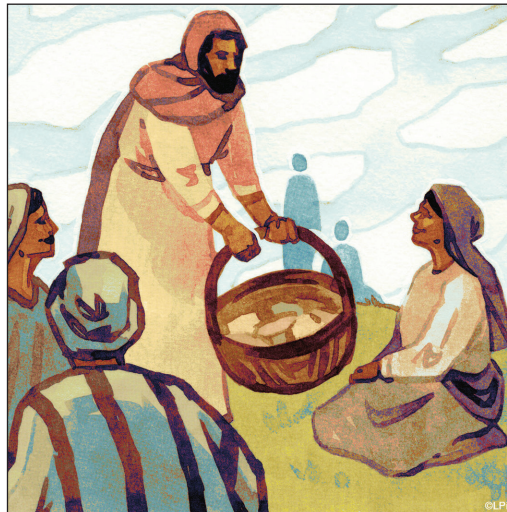
The People Are Hungry

The crowds are following Jesus and he is concerned for their well-being. Last week we heard how Jesus described them "Like sheep without a shepherd." (Mark 6) Now he "tests" the disciples by asking how they might buy enough food to feed the large crowd. It's an unfair question, of course, but not unlike the miracle situation in Cana when the wedding stewards ran out of wine. The disciples look at their scarcity; a young boy with five barley loaves and two fish. What are they for so many? They still don't quite understand Jesus' power and presence.

The people are still hungry. Our psalm response this Sunday declares: "The hand of the Lord feeds us." (Psalm 145) Jesus wants to feed our hungers with the gift of the Holy Eucharist. It is the "source and summit" of our faith and discipleship. Jesus—the Bread of Life—wants to nourish and sustain us as we encounter life's challenges. But like the people on that Galilean hillside, we need to recline and trust in the Lord.

The Gift of the Eucharist

Then, we might imagine Jesus asking the same question of us: *what gifts do you have to share with others?* With our simple gifts Jesus can feed the multitudes—hungry for the bread of life, for community, for compassion, and for healing. Each of us has been given a unique set of talents that can make difference in the lives of those around us and in our community. Jesus can and will multiply our efforts. But we need to be willing to give our gifts for the good of others.



As Fr. Charles pointed out in last week's homily, there are many in our local parish community, particularly the elderly, who may simply need someone to visit them. Some of us have the gift of "listening" and compassionate understanding. Others have an ability to lead and organize. We need willing parents and adults to help lead our Life Kids, First Sacraments, Confirmation, and youth programs this fall. These—and more—are simple responses that can make a big difference.

The miracle story of The Five Loaves is the grounding principle and name for the ministry I share with my wife,

Kimi. As we have traveled the country in the past leading retreats and parish missions, and now here more directly at Our Lady of the Lake, our focus has always been to encourage each person to give their simple gifts of time and talent – trusting that God will use what we give – and work miracles!

First Friday Eucharistic Adoration

Next Friday, August 2, we will have our First Friday Eucharistic Adoration following 8:30am Mass and concluding at 6-7pm with a Holy Hour of praise and worship, and Evening Prayer. Time with the Blessed Sacrament is a good opportunity to reflect on how you are being fed by the Lord and being called to service.

—Tom Tomaszek, Pastoral Associate