

Eighteenth Sunday of the Year

The miracle of the loaves and fish

INTRODUCTION

Through the power of God, Jesus was able to share five loaves and two fish with a crowd of five thousand people. Today he shares himself with us through the Eucharist, the bread of everlasting life.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and read the following prayer: Jesus, you told us that you are the light of the world, shining in the darkness to guide us on our journey. If we keep our eyes on the light, we will not wander into dark places, and our journey will lead us to you in heaven.

SORRY

In this reading, Jesus reminds us how important it is for us to forgive and make our peace with others if we want to love God and come to him.

If you are about to come before God to pray and then remember that you have quarreled with someone, first go away, settle your argument, and make your peace with them.

(Matthew 5:23–26)

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 2.

GOSPEL (MATTHEW 14:13–21)

A large crowd had followed Jesus to a hillside beside the Sea of Galilee to hear him teach. As it grew late in the day, the disciples asked Jesus to send the people away to find some food for themselves. "They do not need to leave," said Jesus. "We can share our food with them."

"But all we have for ourselves are five loaves and two fish, and there must be five thousand people to feed!" exclaimed the disciples. "Bring the food to me," said Jesus and he told the crowds to sit down quietly. Jesus took the loaves and fish and gave thanks to God. He blessed the bread, broke it, and handed it to the disciples to share with the

people. There was plenty for everyone to eat, and when they had finished eating, they filled twelve baskets with the scraps. The people were amazed, and they went away telling everyone about the miracle they had seen that day.

DISCUSSION

Why were the disciples surprised when Jesus told them to share their food with the crowd? They only had five loaves and two fish, so how could they possibly feed so many?

What did Jesus do with the loaves of bread? He blessed them according to the Jewish custom, broke them, and gave them out to the disciples. The Last Supper was another occasion when Jesus blessed bread and shared it with other people.

We remember this meal on Sunday, when the priest blesses the bread and wine at Mass so that they can become the body and blood of Christ for us to share in the Eucharistic meal. Just as Jesus fed the thousands that day, so he continues to feed millions today with his own body and blood, through the power of God's spirit.

How do you think the disciples felt as they gave out the loaves and the fish? They had seen Jesus perform many wonderful miracles, and they believed in him. This did not stop them from being amazed by the power of Jesus, as he again proved to them that he was indeed the son of God.

ACTIVITY

Use small squares of ready gummed paper for the children to stick over the shapes to make a mosaic picture. You might want to show a copy of the famous Byzantine mosaic of the loaves and fishes found at Tabgha where this miracle is said to have taken place.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, help us to share whatever we have with others and not to be greedy in any way. As we remember our brothers and sisters in other countries who have no food, We pray that the rest of the world will learn to share, too, so that the world can be a happier place.

