

# Scripture Study

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ – Cycle C



## **Opening prayer**

Genesis 14:18-20

(Ps 110:1-4)

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

**Luke 9:11b-17**

## *Overview of the Gospel:*

- The account in this Sunday's Gospel is, besides the Resurrection, the only one common to all four gospels (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-13).
- Jesus and his disciples are in Galilee and the disciples have just returned from being sent out to preach and heal the sick (Luke 9:1-6). The crowds go out to meet Jesus and he receives them ("welcomed" them, says the RSV) and, according to Mark's gospel, "he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34).
- As it grows late, the disciples advise Jesus to send the crowds away to find lodging and food. When Jesus tells them to see to it themselves, they are incredulous: All they have on hand are five loaves and two fishes. How can they feed so many with so little?
- Jesus shows them that he is more than able to meet their needs—and then some. In this way he also foreshadows the abundance of his Kingdom—especially in the abundant life he offers through his own Body and Blood in the Most Holy Eucharist.

## *Questions:*

- How do you account for the differences in the way Jesus and the disciples view the crowds? What thoughts must the disciples have as they collect the leftovers? Describe how the disciples might have felt in verse 15. In verses 16-17? In verses 18-21?
- How does this story reflect Eucharistic language (Luke 22:19-20, 24:30; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)? What Old Testament event is similar (2 Kings 4:42-44)? How are the events related in the First Reading also a foreshadowing of the priesthood and the Eucharist?
- How does the function of distributing the loaves and fishes (verses 14-16) point to the disciple's priesthood?
- How have you seen Jesus stretch your resources beyond what you could imagine?
- How has Jesus fed you when you've been spiritually hungry lately? When you sense that hunger, do you come searching for him, or do you usually try to fill up on something else first? If so what, what? Why?

**Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 1335, 1329, 1338**

## **Closing Prayer**

*If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion.*

- St. Maximilian Kolbe

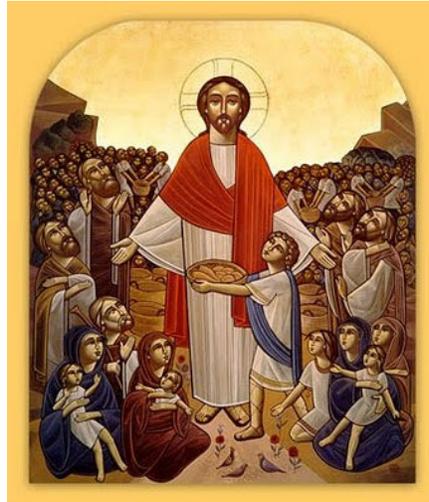
**Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!**

# “All ate and were satisfied”

**Scripture:** Luke 9:11-17

*When the crowds learned it, they followed him; and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing. Now the day began to wear away; and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away, to go into the villages and country round about, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a lonely place." 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." For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each." And they did so, and made them all sit down. 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. And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.*

**Meditation:** Are you hungry for God and the life he offers us? Jesus put his disciples in a difficult spot when he commanded them to do what seemed impossible – to feed a large and hungry crowd when there were no adequate provision of food in sight. Jesus, no doubt wanted to test their faith and to teach them to rely upon God for their provision. The signs which Jesus did, including the miraculous feeding of the five thousand signified that God the Father had indeed sent his only begotten Son as the anointed Prophet and King for his people. Jesus' feeding of the five thousand



is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels. What is the significance of this miracle? The miraculous feeding of such a great multitude pointed to God's provision of manna in the wilderness for the people of Israel under Moses' leadership. This food foreshadowed the true heavenly bread which Jesus would offer his followers. Jesus makes a claim only God can make: He is the true bread of heaven that can satisfy the deepest hunger we experience. The feeding of the five thousand shows the remarkable generosity of God and his great kindness towards us. When God gives, he gives abundantly. He gives more than we need for ourselves that we may have something to share with others, especially those in need. God takes the little we have and multiplies it for the good of others. Do you trust in God's provision for you and do you share freely with others, especially those who lack?

Jesus' feeding of the five thousand points to the superabundance of the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. Jesus transforms the Passover of the old covenant into the meal of the "new covenant in my blood". In the Old Covenant bread and

wine were offered in sacrifice as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to their Creator. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine, who was both priest and king (Genesis 14:18), prefigured the offering made by Jesus, our high priest and king. The unleavened bread at Passover and the miraculous manna in the desert are the pledge of God's faithfulness to his promises. The "cup of blessing" at the end of the Jewish passover meal points to the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Jesus gave a new and definitive meaning to the blessing of the bread and the cup when he instituted the "Lord's Supper" or "Eucharist". He speaks of the presence of his body and blood in this new meal. When at the Last Supper Jesus described his blood "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28), he was explaining his coming crucifixion as a sacrifice for sins. His death on the cross fulfilled the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. That is why John the Baptist called him the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Jesus made himself an offering and sacrifice, a gift that was truly pleasing to the Father. He "offered himself without blemish to God" (Hebrews 9:14) and "gave himself as a sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2). This meal was a memorial of his death and resurrection. Do you hunger for the bread of life?

*"Lord Jesus, you are the "Bread of Life" and the "Cup of Salvation". Fill me with gratitude and longing for the true Bread of Heaven which gives strength and healing for body and soul."*

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