

**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.*

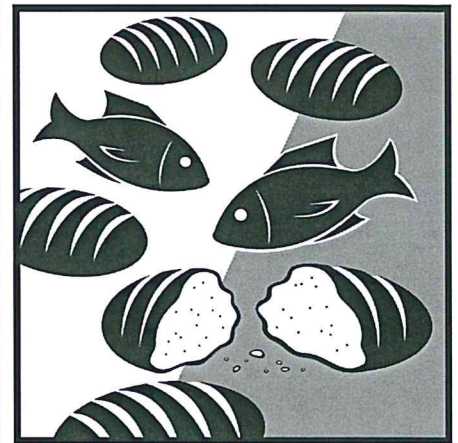
*Alleluia!*

**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 Greg Sunter**

The response of today's psalm is an excellent summary of the theme that runs throughout today's readings: *The hand of the Lord feeds us: he answers all our needs.* The compassion of God is foremost in these readings—recognizing need within the people and responding with an overflowing abundance. In the gospel, the abundant response of God is the miraculous feeding of more than five thousand people with twelve baskets full of leftovers.

As it became late in the day, the disciples wanted Jesus to send the people away to the nearby villages so that they could buy food for themselves. But Jesus is moved with compassion for the people. He knows that as it is now evening they probably won't be allowed to enter any of the local villages and, even if they were, they probably didn't have money with which to buy food. So it is compassionate care that moves Jesus to act. Remember, he had tried to get away from the crowds to spend some private time mourning the death of John the Baptist. He was entitled to be frustrated and angry with them for intruding on his grief. Instead, when they tracked him down, he went ashore and healed them and taught them. When it came to the evening he went one step further in his compassion and made sure that all were fed.

At the time of writing, the gospel writer knew that his audience would be familiar with the Eucharistic meal. The words and actions of Jesus in this miraculous feeding event foreshadow the events of the Last Supper: he *took* the bread and fish, *gave thanks*, *broke* the bread, and *gave* it to the disciples to distribute. This event is a Eucharistic one just as much as the Last Supper.

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