

Sunday Summary

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

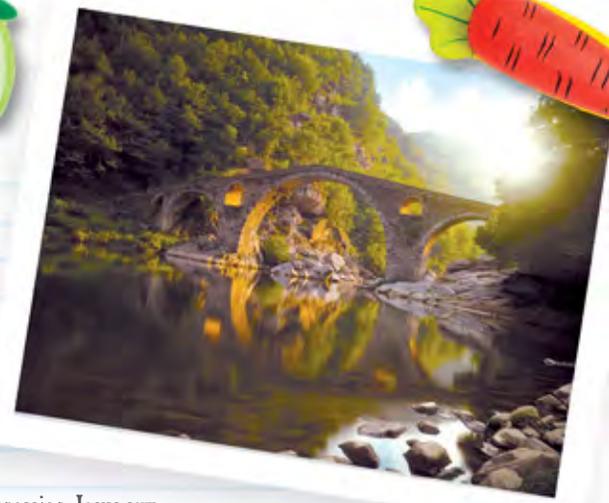
Today's gospel covers the return of the disciples to Jesus and then the feeding of the five thousand—the only miracle recorded in all four gospels.

The themes of wilderness, eating and bread recall God's provision of manna for God's people (Exodus 16; Numbers 11). Elisha also, like Moses, provided food for many (2 Kings 4:42-44). Such abundance was expected at the coming of the Messiah who would gather God's people to the banquet table (Isaiah 25:6-8; 49:10; 55:1-2).

Thus Jesus was fulfilling both the law and the prophets. The absence of the usual report of the crowd's response to Jesus' act makes clear that the emphasis lies not upon its miraculous nature but upon its revelation of Jesus' true significance.

Note: Because this week's gospel bookends (but skips) two critical stories of Jesus' ministry (the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus' walking on the water) and because next week's gospel (John 6:1-21) tells both of these stories, we're expanding today's reading to include the story of the feeding of the 5,000, then focusing next week on the second of these two stories, Jesus' walking on the water.

Weekly Reflection



The story of the miraculous hillside picnic with the gracious host in command contains much food for thought. How deeply significant is Mark's simple sentence: "They all ate and were satisfied." With compassion, Jesus saw the multitude "like sheep without a shepherd," and he bade them to sit down in that green pasture to be rested and fed.

The scripture implies that a great spiritual hunger had brought the crowd to Jesus, for "he began to teach them many things," until it grew late. He had very likely told this people that God loved each of them and that the gates of the kingdom were open to all. Whatever human condition was their own, they were not beyond God's care and acceptance.

Whether or not we believe the details of this story, the good news is it makes us expectant and hopeful that Jesus can always satisfy our needs in abundant and sometimes inexplicable ways. We are not prone to be puzzled by good fortune (somehow we think we deserve it), and so may sometimes miss an important sign in an unexpected blessing. Neither the great throng nor the disciples seemed to understand the mysterious multiplication of the loaves and fish at the time. That which was given for the people's needs became more adequate under the Lord's blessing. Never can we hesitate to donate our little in the face of an overwhelming need.



Food for Thought

- ❖ How are we called to live out the reality of our Eucharistic unity?



Food for Thought

- ❖ How have you lived your understanding of the Eucharist as described in today's "feast" readings?

Bridges for Tridgers

Recipe for Awareness

Begin with a moment of centering silence and quiet reflection, setting aside the concerns and agenda of the day.



1 We come to an awareness of God's presence in our family.

"Dear God, who is present with our family now, and at all times and in all ways,..."

Continue with:

2 We express our gratitude for today's gifts from God.

"Today I give thanks for..." or
"Today, I am grateful for..."

Pause again for another moment of centering silence and quiet reflection.

3 We come to an awareness of God's presence in our own experience.

Silently contemplate the question:
"When have I acted from love?"

Silently contemplate the question:
"When have I acted from fear?"

Based on your contemplation, create your intention to move forward as an expression of God's Love.

4 We plan and move forward with God.

"God, help me to manifest your presence today by..."

Invitations to Community

- Today's gospel, in which Jesus feeds his followers, is also a story of the Eucharist: the sacrament in which we who follow Jesus are amply fed. What needs do we bring to the Eucharist? How have we experienced Jesus' power to feed us in the Eucharist? Praise God for satisfying our hungers through the gift of the Eucharist.
- Jesus asks his disciples to feed those who are hungry. What hunger exists in the community? What does our congregation do and give to the relief of that hunger? Pray for the hungry of the community, that they may be fed, and for the disciples of Jesus of the community, that their eyes and hearts may be opened to the needs of the hungry.

Suggestions for Families

Thanking God for food is a simple act that unites today's gospel, the Eucharist and our family meals. With a little practice and commitment, pausing to offer prayers of thanks at mealtimes becomes a convenient way to create a moment of centering silence in which to meet with God. Write a prayer together this week to use as a grace at meals:

- Contemplate the chain of hands responsible for bringing food to your family's table. Name and give thanks to each person who participated in "preparing" your meal.
- Contemplate the ways you enjoy the food before you with each of your senses. Find a moment of gratitude for the way your meal looks, smells, tastes, feels and sounds! Give thanks to God for each of the ways you will experience and enjoy your meal.

Prayer Starter

Take the bread of my life,
Lord Jesus. Bless it. Break it.

Give it to others...

