

18th Sunday of the Year A

*The Lord is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts. (Ps 144:18)*



First Reading

Isaiah 55:1-3

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.

Second Reading

Romans 8:35.37-39

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

Matthew 14:13-21

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.

Meditation

In today's liturgy we are once again invited to the great feast of God's kingdom. Throughout the scriptures this image of the messianic banquet evokes a sense of the abundance and the conviviality which will characterize the fullness of life to be enjoyed by all God's people at the end time. The prophet Isaiah silences potential protests of unworthiness. All that is required to sit down at this table is awareness of one's need. Everyone who is hungry and thirsty is admitted free. The evangelist points out the extravagance of the meal. There is ample food for everyone, with plenty to spare. The apostle Paul, in the concluding passage from Romans, suggests the true nature of the feast. We are nourished and sustained by the over-whelming and unshakeable love which God has heaped upon us in Christ Jesus.

Today we feast together at the eucharistic table which is foretaste and pledge of the banquet to come. Despite the prophet's words, however, our meal has its price. We must bring to the table the "loaves and fish" of our everyday lives to be transformed and shared for the nourishment of all.

We who are Church must go from the table to carry the bread of the kingdom to all our sisters and brothers who hunger and thirst for life.