

Sunday, August 2, 2026 – Eighteenth Sunday of Easter Year A

First Reading - Isaiah 55:1-3

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

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.

Second Reading - Romans 8:35. 37-39

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

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 - Matthew 4:4

Alleluia, alleluia!

No one lives on bread alone,

but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Alleluia!

Gospel - Matthew 14:13-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

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.

Food as Gift of our Gracious God
Reflection on the Gospel-18th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A
(Matthew 14:13-21)
Veronica Lawson RSM

Forty-five million people are presently at risk of acute hunger on account of the Middle East conflict (WFP 28/06/26). At the same time, the number of people living in extreme poverty numbers some 830 million, approximately ten per cent of the global population, down from nineteen per cent in 1990. Encouraging as the improved statistics may be in this case, it is still a fact that almost three quarters of a billion people have less than \$US1.90 per day to meet all their basic needs for food, shelter and security. At the same time, the gap between rich and poor is widening dramatically. My country Australia, for instance, wastes enough food annually to fill the Melbourne Cricket Ground nine times over (www.dcceew.gov.au). It is difficult for us in our affluent society to imagine the plight of so many in the war-torn and earth-quake affected countries of our world. It is virtually impossible for us to get inside the desperation of parents in Gaza or Myanmar watching their children die from starvation.

What has this to do with our gospel reflection? In the first reading from Isaiah, God tells the "thirsty": "Listen and delight in rich food.... Incline your ear and come to me; listen that you may live". Isaiah is here reminding his hearers that food is a gift from God. The gospel reading from Matthew tells a story of hungry people "hearing", following Jesus and enjoying an abundance of life-sustaining food. In other words, Matthew presents Jesus as the one who makes Isaiah's prophetic dream a reality for those who hunger and thirst, both literally and figuratively. The passage echoes key aspects of Israel's history. Jesus retreats to a "desert" place, recalling the experience of God's people in the wilderness of Sinai. Those who follow Jesus find life-restoring food in the desert, just as God provided manna for the hungry Israelites in the Sinai desert.

Jesus has compassion for people struggling with disease and thirsting for the means to live. In biblical terms, compassion is always accompanied by action for restorative justice. Jesus heals the sick and creates a structure for the sharing of resources. Faced with a hungry crowd, the disciples offer a

simple solution: “Send them away.” Sending the desperate away has, sadly, been part of our national response to countless asylum seekers hungering and thirsting for life and security. Jesus refuses such a solution and invites his disciples instead to take some personal responsibility for the situation. The gospel invites us to attend to food security in our world and to address ways of meeting the new Sustainable Development Goal of eliminating poverty and hunger by 2030. Keeping ourselves informed on the issues might be one place to begin. Another might be to check supplies before shopping for more food and to ensure that we waste not even a scrap of the food which we receive as gift of a gracious, compassionate God.

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