

## **Eighteenth Sunday of the Year (A)**

2nd August 2020

Dear Friends,

August brings us to the fifth month since COVID-19 reached our shores, and changed our lives. This pandemic has brought out the best and the worst in people.

As Christians, we should find ourselves numbered among those who have brought out the best in themselves, and the best in others.

Sometimes we despair, because the good we do doesn't seem to make the world a better place. We cannot see as God sees... We do not see the little ripples that happened because of our touch... We are our harshest critics.

Today's Readings from Scripture are all about the generous goodness and love of God. We can be sure that God would never remove his love from us. God's love is always there for us. If we can live in God's love we will know ourselves to be held safe and secure through every moment of our lives.

The prophet Isaiah (55:1-3), Saint Paul in the second reading Romans (8:35. 37-39) and Jesus in the Gospel Matthew (14:13 to 21) each speak to our hearts about the love of God; of his care, and generosity.

### [Readings for Eighteenth Sunday of the Year 2020](#)

The Gospel of the 'Feeding of the 5000' is well known and loved by us all, from childhood to old age. Saint Paul's Letter to the early Christians in Rome is frequently chosen to be read at funerals.

The words of the first Reading are captured in one of our Eastertide hymns. So each of our Readings is individually known and loved.

The prophet Isaiah announces a God who will feed his hungry people. He feeds his people spiritually.  
... Come to me, ... Listen and you shall live.  
With you I will make an everlasting covenant  
Out of the favours promised to David"

Having heard these words we can pray: 'You open wide your hand, oh Lord, you grant our hearts desires.

The Lord is just in all his ways and loving in all his Deeds. He is close to all who call on him, call on him from their hearts.

The gospel begins with a great sadness for Jesus; he has heard the news of his cousin, John the Baptist's death. To deal with his loss, Jesus



wants to go somewhere quiet taking only his close friends, the disciples. BUT, the quiet and peace that Jesus needs is lost because people can see him in a boat with his disciples, they know where he is going, and set off on foot to be there with him ...

As Jesus steps out of the boat he sees the gathering people. Among them are those who are sick. Seeing the sick, Jesus is filled with compassion, takes pity on them, and heals them of every sickness.

Jesus has put His own needs to one side.

As Jesus moves through the crowds, people are talking to Him. He sets himself to teach them and they listen intently. They listen because the words he speaks are words of a God who has affection for his people, compassion and mercy ... they are the words of a God who cares about each one of them. This is so different to anything that they have ever heard from the Pharisees. They 'can't get enough' of this man, Jesus. He speaks with an authority that they have never heard before.



As evening draws on, the disciples realise that the crowds are soon going to be hungry. They talk about what can be done about this. So many, many people and no food-the crowds will have to be sent to all the local villages to find food.

They take their plan to Jesus "this is a lonely place, and the time has slipped by, so send the people away and then they can go to the villages to buy themselves some food"...

We can miss something in this sentence because we are focused on 'food'. "The time has slipped by" ... The compassion and pity that Jesus felt when he first saw the crowds has been his driving force; he has moved among them healing those who are sick, and we can be sure that he taught the people - maybe because of the questions they asked him.

Why would he send this hungry crowd away from him? They were "hungry" for more than food; they were hungry for the word of God. It was on this hunger that Jesus was focused.

"Don't send them away (from me)  
Feed them yourselves" ... (THE WORD OF GOD)  
... "But how?" they ask... "With what?"

It's almost as if Jesus says "use your initiative! Feed them with what you have."

"But we haven't got anything... How...?"

"Jesus, we only have five loaves and two fish between us"

"Bring them here to me" (THE OFFERTORY)

Jesus takes the loaves and fishes, looks towards heaven, and blesses them. (THE CONSECRATION)

He then gives them to the disciples to distribute among the crowds. (HOLY COMMUNION)

5000 men had been fed (women and children weren't counted)  
There were 12 baskets of leftovers which were collected (THE HOSTS PLACED IN THE TABERNACLE)

Saint Matthew doesn't mention "a young boy with five loaves and two fish". For Matthew it is the disciples who have what is needed.

Ask yourself:

Are we people in the hungry crowd?  
Are we people who Jesus has healed?  
Are we people who have listened to the teachings offered by Jesus?  
Did we share something of the loaves and fishes?  
Did we distribute some of the loaves and fishes?  
Did we see the leftovers and realise how much we have to give others?



If we answer a simple "Yes" to each of these questions, we will find something of ourselves in each of the categories. We were FULLY present to Jesus.

"Nothing can come between us and the love of God."

Meditating on the Scriptures is a great adventure and we always learn something new about God's love for us.

Enjoy peacefully exploring the Word of God for yourself...

Take time now to sit down, with a cup of coffee or tea, and to think through what you have just read and the thoughts that have come to mind...  
Read through the Scriptures for the Eighteenth Sunday for yourself...

May you always find the treasure that is hidden in the Word of God.

*Fr. Michael*

*Sr. Lisa*

A 'PS' from Fr Michael

Children, you all know that I love cats. When I got my first cat she was black with a little white collar (just like a priest).

Her name was 'Scraps'.

Can you guess why?

Yes, because she was supposed to eat scraps of meat.

Did you hear in the Gospel-story the word 'leftovers'? That's the same as scraps. It was because of this story that I called her Scraps.

Children used to come to our House especially to feed her. She was very popular.