

Connecting with the Sunday Readings

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ **Gospel Word**
Luke 9:11b–17

Saint Luke, the Evangelist, seems to have remembered and then wrote about every important meal associated with Jesus. He actually described ten of them in his Gospel, more than any of the other Gospel writers. But when you read them one after another, you begin to notice that they are all variations on a single theme. They are all connected with the Eucharistic meal when Jesus blessed, broke, and gave food to those gathered. This Sunday it was served to 5,000 men. No doubt there were women and children too, but they are not mentioned. That tells you something about the culture of this time. Hopefully, the way we count people has changed.

This Sunday is an annual church feast. We recall and give thanks for the gift of the Eucharist, which is no small matter for the Church, the Christian community. Love requires nourishment. To live the full Christian life, we are given the greatest of all possible gifts, the very Body and Blood of Christ, as food for our journey. We are reminded of the importance of this gift from God by recalling each year its important place in our lives.

Living the Word

In today's Gospel story we are challenged to think about it from many perspectives. We can wonder about how Jesus actually multiplied five loaves of bread and two fishes to feed so many people, even to the point where there were massive leftovers! We might imagine the heart of Christ as he looked out over the masses and realized that they were hungry. While Luke does not mention the boy who had the loaves and fishes, we all know that he is part of what happened. So, we can reflect on the generosity he showed in offering what he had (perhaps food that was brought for his family) for others? Some biblical scholars say that when his example came forth, others (who had hidden the food they had because they were hoarding it for themselves) decided that they too should share. Any way you look at it, it's a genuine miracle whether it is about the power of Jesus or the generosity of the boy. This is a special Gospel theme that Christ points to essential features of the Christian life.

Clearly the focus is on the actions of Jesus: he blessed, broke, and shared all that was available! This is the essence of his mission. This is the blessedness of the gift of life (all that comes from God – like bread and fish are – holy): the need to break bread (a symbolic way of describing genuine love and the sharing of oneself with others) as well as the passing out of the food among the multitude (sharing is the deep act of doing what God does continuously in creating and sustaining us). In those three acts – blessing, breaking, and sharing – we can find key aspects of the Christian life.

One-line Prayer

Bless us, O Lord. Break us open, O Lord. Help us share ourselves with each other. Amen.

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A Gospel Word for the Home

Luke 9:11b-17

In today's Gospel story we are challenged to think about it from many perspectives. We can wonder about how Jesus actually multiplied five loaves of bread and two fishes to feed so many people, even to the point where there were massive leftovers! We might imagine the heart of Christ as he looked out over the masses and realized that they were hungry. Christ provided a genuine miracle through his generous love and mercy. This is a special Gospel theme that Christ points to essential features of the Christian life.

Clearly the focus is on the actions of Jesus: he blessed, broke, and shared all that was available! This is the essence of his mission. To point to the blessedness of the gift of life (all that comes from God—like bread and fish—are holy), to need to break bread (a symbolic way of describing genuine love and the sharing of oneself with others) and the passing out of the food among the multitude (sharing is the deep act of doing what God does continuously in creating and sustaining us). In those three acts—blessing, breaking, and sharing—we can find key aspects of the Christian life. And we can say more.

Parent Survival

Parents need no reminder that they feed the hungry. This literally begins even before birth. And it continues for years. How we think about our feeding others can range from the almost meaningless to it being very meaningful for us. For example, all the meals in Luke's Gospel can be connected with our being fed by the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Jesus gives of himself to us as food for our spiritual journey. Don't parents do something like this when they prepare breakfast in the morning or other "feedings" all the way to a midnight snack for ever-starving (their words) children?

Saint Luke focuses on shared meals because they are all important. They nourish our bodies and our spirits. Christ remains present in his Body, the Church. We recall and celebrate his continued presence when we gather to celebrate the Eucharistic meal. One question worth our meditation is how that meal sheds light on the ordinary family meals of our lives. Is there a connection? How can what we take in also be thought of as nourishment, which is "blessed, broken and shared?"

Car or Meal Talk

Tell in your own words the wonderful story of the feeding of the 5,000 and find out what it says to each member of your family.

One-Line Prayer

Bless us O Lord. Break us open O Lord.
Help us share ourselves with each other.
Amen.