



18th Sunday Ord. Time Yr A

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Our text comes after Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God through the 7 Parables. He moved on to his hometown and taught there. He left there without doing any miracles because of their lack of faith. That was discouraging but the news of the death of his cousin, John the Baptist (an innocent victim), was doubtless devastating. So they went off to take some time alone. Other people, who had at least some faith in Jesus, sought him out and were there when he came to his lonely place. Jesus responded to their faith with miracles, teaching and care. His actions challenge them to have even more faith in him. Jesus' actions begin to reveal his intimate relationship with God his Father and how God is a God of compassion. Though we may let Jesus down, his compassion is always there for us. This first miracle of the loaves and fishes foreshadows the gift of the Eucharist through which God's compassion and love sustains us – 'the bread of compassion'. The second miracle comes after a person, the least expected, shows great faith. To experience God's blessings, the blessings of the Kingdom, we must have, at least, some faith.

Read: **Matthew 14: 13 – 21**

Meditatio: How have I reacted at the death of close relative? Do I find solace in taking time alone? When have I gone out of my way to listen to or get to know someone? What do I do, to let Jesus speak to me and/or advise me? Have I asked Jesus' help when I have been ill? What have I done when my plans have been thwarted e.g. by unexpected visitors? Has the time 'slipped away' as I spent time listening or sharing with someone? Have I helped people with me who are in need or expected them to look after themselves? Do I hold back from helping others because I think what I might do would be insignificant? Do I trust that Jesus will work through the little things that I do for others? What would I have thought if I was one of the disciples to whom Jesus gave the blessed and broken loaves? Would I have questioned Jesus or given the bread out at once? If I was there, could I have eaten my portion or would I have paused in wonderment of the miracle in which I was sharing? Do I appreciate the wonder of receiving Holy Communion? Am I generous or do I just give enough?

Oratio: Pray for those who seek to know and learn from Jesus. Pray for those who have been bereaved, especially through COVID-19. Pray for openness to those in need even when they interrupt our plans. Pray for trust that Jesus works through even the little things we do for others. Pray that the gifts of bread and wine will truly represent our gifts of service we give to others (in need). Pray for a love of the miracle of the Eucharist. Pray that the Eucharist will sustain us and enable us to continue in the ways of service. Pray that we will be generous as God is to us - giving enough and a little more. Pray that the 'little more' will advance our world as balance is not sought but rather an increase in love and service.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Be generous in service.

✍ Fr Joe

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.