

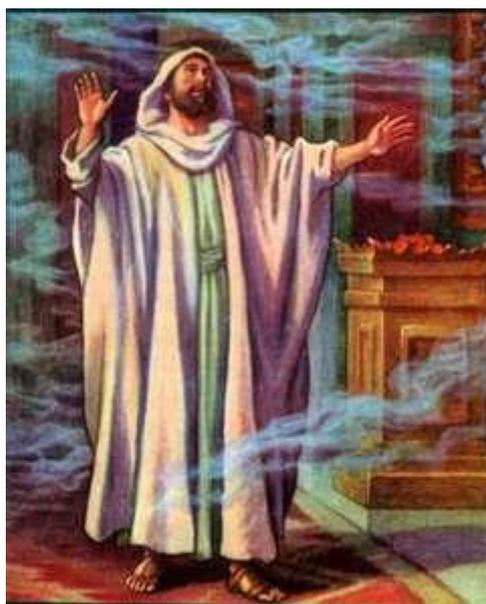
READINGS AND REFLECTION FOR THE 18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/readings/>

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah 55:1-3
Come 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.



The Word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 144

RESPONSE

YOU OPEN WIDE YOUR HAND, O LORD, YOU GRANT OUR DESIRES.

1. The Lord is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all, compassionate to all his creatures. **RESPONSE**
2. The eyes of all creatures look to you. You give them their food in due time.
You open wide your hand and grant the desires of all who live. **RESPONSE**
3. The Lord is just in all his ways and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him, call on him from their hearts. **RESPONSE**

SECOND READING

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:35. 37-39

*No created thing, can ever come between us
and the love of God made visible in Christ*

Nothing therefore 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.



The Word of the Lord

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the
mouth of God.*

Matthew 4:4

GOSPEL

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew 14:13-21

They all ate as much as they wanted.

When Jesus received this news, 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'.

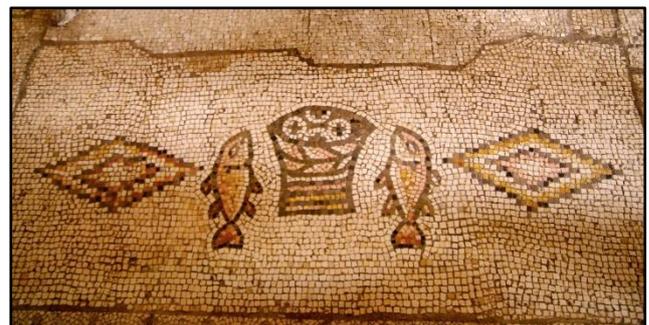
But they answered 'All we have with us is five loaves and two fish'. 'Bring them here to me' he said.

He gave orders that the people were to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. 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.

The Gospel of the Lord



Tabgha - on the Sea of Galilee where the Church by the Sea with this mosaic commemorates Jesus' feeding of the multitude.

The Jerusalem Bible, by Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Isaiah asks us, "Why spend your money on things that don't satisfy our deep cravings? God calls us to the banquet of life. To accept this invitation, we don't need a lot of things.

Isaiah is suggesting that our dis-ease come from not knowing or confusing what we really want from life. Verse three begins, "Pay attention. Come to me." God calls us to live our lives fully awake, carefully, attentively, watchfully and mindfully . There are reasons in this CoVid time why people are genuinely anxious. Authorities are concerned whether some of us are ignoring our responsibilities for ourselves and others.

Food is a metaphor for life. "Pay attention, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare." The simplicity of a bowl of soup and a piece of fresh bread enjoyed with care for others is better, richer fare than a four course meal eaten when our hearts are disturbed or if we are not taking account of others' needs.

Perhaps we are less concerned about the nourishment of the spirit. Where do we find our soul food? Through Isaiah, God says to us, "Let me feed you. It will be rich food, only the best." We need reassurance and this God supplies. "I fed you in the wilderness."

In Matthew's story of the feeding of the crowd, Jesus calls his disciples to be hosts to the hungry. "There is no need to send them away, you feed them." Like the disciples, we can reply, "We haven't got anything, except five loaves and a couple of fish." In other words, what could you expect us to do with this?

Jesus said the blessing over the food, broke it and passed it on to the disciples, who in turn, gave the food to the people.

As God so generously feeds us, so we must share this "food" with others. What has been given to us freely so we must give freely to others. The Eucharist is the great sign to us that, as we are fed so must we feed. We give the bread and wine of compassion, of mercy, of faithfulness, of, love, of joy - not just in small doses like a counter lunch but a banquet pressed down and flowing over.

The first sign of the beginnings of reconciliation in any family is often when someone accepts the invitation to 'come to the table'. In the warmth of human fellowship, the grace of God has a fertile ground to begin the healing of old hurts. Let's call everyone to 'the feast' – whatever that may be. Patricia Stevenson rsj.