

Sunday Readings

28th July 2024

Gospel Acclamation

cf. Jn 6:63.68

Alleluia, alleluia!

*Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are life:*

you have the message of eternal life.

Alleluia!

FIRST READING

A reading from the second book of the Kings 4:42-44

GOSPEL

John 6:1-15

'A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing Elisha, the man of God, bread from the first-fruits, twenty barley loaves and fresh grain in the ear.' 'Give it to the people to eat', Elisha said. But his servant replied, 'How can I serve this to a hundred men?' 'Give it to the people to eat' he insisted 'for the Lord says this, "They will eat and have some left over."' He served them; they ate and had some left over, as the Lord had said.

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee – or of Tiberias – and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 144:10-11. 15-18. R/. v.16

R/. You open wide your hand, O Lord, and grant our desires.

All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign
and declare your might, O God. **R/.**

The eyes of all creatures look to you
and you give them their food in due time.
You open wide your hand,
grant the desires of all who live. **R/.**

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

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Ephesians 4:1-6

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

The word of the Lord.

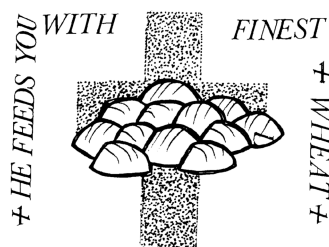
Thanks be to God.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer after Communion

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament, the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son; grant, we pray, that this gift, which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.



The Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year B

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

“Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?”

Can anything on this earth truly satisfy the deepest longing and hunger we experience? A great multitude had gathered to hear Jesus, no doubt because they were hungry for the word of life. Jesus' disciples wanted to send them away at the end of the day because they did not have the resources to feed them. They even complained how much money it would take to feed such a crowd - at least six month's wages! Jesus, the *Bread of Life*, took the little they had - five loaves and two fish - and giving thanks to his heavenly Father, distributed to all until they were satisfied of their hunger. The people of Israel had been waiting for the prophet whom Moses had promised. The signs which Jesus did, including the miraculous feeding of the five thousand signified that God had indeed sent him as anointed Prophet and King. Jesus' feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels. What is the significance of this miracle? The miraculous feeding of such a great multitude pointed to God's provision of manna in the wilderness for the people of Israel under Moses' leadership. This food foreshadowed the true heavenly bread which Jesus would offer his followers.

Jesus makes a claim only God can make: He is the *true bread of heaven* that can satisfy the deepest hunger we experience. The feeding of the five thousand shows the remarkable generosity of God and his great kindness towards us. When God gives, he gives abundantly. He gives more than we need for ourselves that we may have something to share with others. God takes the little we have and multiplies it for the good of others.

Prayer of the Week

A Prayer of St Ignatius Loyola

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my heart and all my will, whatsoever I have and possess. You have given all these things to me. To thee, O Lord, I restore them. All are thine, dispose of them according to thy will. Give me thy love and grace; this is enough for me.

Amen.

Wednesday 31 July 2024

St Ignatius Loyola (1491 - 1556)

Ignatius (or Iñigo) was born in Loyola in the Spanish Basque country. He was a soldier, but was wounded in the battle of Pamplona (against the French) at the age of 30. During a long convalescence he read a life of Christ and a collection of lives of the saints, and discovered that his true vocation was to devote his life wholly to God. He was as systematic about this as he had been about his military career: he spent a year's retreat in a Dominican friary, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and then set about learning Latin.

Such enthusiasm in a layman caused grave suspicion in the Spanish authorities, and he was questioned and imprisoned more than once. He moved to Paris in 1528 and continued his studies; and then in 1534 Ignatius and six companions bound themselves to become missionaries to the Muslims in Palestine. By the time they were ready to set out, war made the journey impossible and so the group (now numbering ten) offered their services to the Pope in any capacity he might choose. A number of them were duly ordained and they were all assigned to various tasks.

Soon it was proposed that they should organise themselves into a regular religious order, and in 1540 the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) was formed. Ignatius was the first Superior General until his death. Soon after their foundation the Jesuits began to meet the challenge of the Reformation: a tough task, given the debilitated state into which the Church had fallen, but one which, as Ignatius said, had to be undertaken “without hard words or contempt for people's errors”.

Ignatius had a gift for inspiring friendship, and was the recipient of deep spiritual insight. Soon after his conversion Ignatius wrote the *Spiritual Exercises*, a systematic step-by-step retreat that can be followed by anyone - and has been followed by many, not all of them Catholics, ever since.

