

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Jn 6:51-52

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live for ever. Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Lk 9:11-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*They all ate and were filled.*

Jesus made the crowds welcome and talked to them about the kingdom of God; and he cured those who were in need of healing. It was late afternoon when the Twelve came to him and said, 'Send the people away, and they can go to the villages and farms round about to find lodging and food; for we are in a lonely place

and have nothing to eat. It is now about five o'clock and the people are beginning to go home. But they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we are to go ourselves and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. But he said to his disciples, 'Get them to sit down in parties of about fifty.' They did so and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven, and said the blessing over them; then he broke them and handed them to his disciples to distribute among the crowd. They all ate as much as they wanted, and when the scraps remaining were collected they filled twelve baskets.

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

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# Reflections on the Gospel



# THE SAVING WORD

THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI) / C

23 JUNE 2019

## CELEBRATING THE HOSPITALITY OF GOD

The Gospel for today's feast very appropriately tells of the divine hospitality Jesus provided for thousands of people, multiplying loaves and fishes to feed them.

The twelve apostles, genuinely concerned, for the crowd, make a practical suggestion. Send the people away to find food and lodging for the night. Jesus throws back the challenge: 'You provide them with food'. They are aghast.

In human terms hospitality on such a scale is impossible. But Jesus is going to make them ministers of the hospitality of God.

The people are made to sit down in groups—a clear signal that they are about to be fed. Then, invoking heaven (to show the divine source), blessing and breaking the loaves and fishes (the language has clear Eucharistic echoes), Jesus miraculously makes it possible for the Twelve to feed the entire crowd—not merely adequately but so abundantly that even after all had eaten each of the Twelve has a full basket of broken pieces left over. God is never niggardly in hospitality; on the contrary, overflowing abundance is its mark.

It is significant that in the supply of food Jesus himself does not deal directly with the crowd. He leaves the distribution entirely to the disciples. He is apprenticing them to be ministers of God's hospitality themselves when, after his ascension, he is physically removed from the scene. In this way the episode foreshadows the Christian Eucharist, the rite in which the Church will experience and celebrate God's hospitality as a foretaste of the banquet of the Kingdom.

**Brendan Byrne, SJ**

**FIRST READING**

Gen 14:18-20

A reading from the book of Genesis  
*Melchizedek brought bread and wine.*

Melchizedek king of Salem brought bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High. He pronounced this blessing: 'Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High for handing over your enemies to you.'

And Abraham gave him a tithe of everything.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

Ps 109:1-4 R. v. 4

**R.** You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

1. The Lord's revelation to my Master: / 'Sit on my right: / I will put your foes beneath your feet.' **R.**

2. The Lord will send from Zion / your sceptre of power: / rule in the midst of all your foes. **R.**

3. A prince from the day of your birth / on the holy mountains; / from the womb before the daybreak I begot you. **R.**

4. The Lord has sworn an oath he will not change. / 'You are a priest for ever, / a priest like Melchizedek of old.' **R.**

**SECOND READING**

1 Cor 11:23-26

A reading from the first letter of St Paul  
to the Corinthians

*Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the death of the Lord.*

This is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you: that on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, and thanked God for it and broke it, and he said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me.' In the same way he took the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me.' Until the



Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

**SEQUENCE**

Behold the bread of angels, sent  
For pilgrims in their banishment,  
The bread for God's true children meant,  
That may not unto dogs be given:  
Oft in the olden types foreshadowed;  
In Isaac on the altar bowed,  
And in the ancient paschal food,  
And in the manna sent from heaven.  
Come then, good shepherd, bread divine,  
Still show to us thy mercy sign;  
Oh, feed us still, still keep us thine;  
So may we see thy glories shine  
In fields of immortality;  
O thou, the wisest, mightiest, best,  
Our present food, our future rest,  
Come, make us each thy chosen guest,  
Co-heirs of thine, and comrades blest  
With saints whose dwelling is with thee.