

# Read

2 Kings 4:42-44

Psalm 145:10-11, 15-16,  
17-18

Ephesians 4:1-6

John 6:1-15

## LIVING THE WORD

### Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 25, 2021



#### REFLECTION

The story of the loaves and fishes is the only miracle recorded in all four accounts of the Gospel; retelling and reflecting on it has always been important to the followers of Christ. On the most basic level, it reminds us that God cares for nourishing both body and soul. We can stay here with that profound nugget, or we can unpack more symbolism, akin to the “Easter eggs” we find in popular movies and culture. For example, let’s look at the loaves of bread: who else multiplied bread to feed others? Elisha (2 Kings 4:42-44), one of the great prophets in the Old Testament. Jesus, the Son of God, goes beyond what God had worked through the prophet in the past—Elisha multiplying twenty loaves to feed a hundred and Jesus multiplies five loaves to feed five thousand, with a great deal of food leftover. We also look forward to how bread will be used later in Jesus’ ministry—Jesus himself as the Bread of Life, who nourishes us with his very Body and Blood in the Eucharist. This is the beauty of Scripture; it forms a cohesive whole because of God’s plan for salvation from the very beginning of creation. If you like Easter eggs, there’s plenty more. Or just enjoy this thought for today: God nourishes both our body and soul with abundance!



#### ACTION

This week, become the hands of Christ by feeding the hungry. Volunteer with your parish or diocese to directly serve those in need. Or consider indirect service, working behind the scenes by taking a shift helping at a food bank. You can also learn about the Catholic Church’s efforts to address poverty and meet the basic needs of human beings. Visit the Poverty USA website from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.



<http://www.povertyusa.org/>



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What difference does the idea that God cares for nourishing both body and soul make to you? To the world?
- ❖ What other symbolism can you see in the multiplication of loaves and fishes?



July 25, 2021

# SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## LECTIONARY #110B

2 Kings 4:42-44

Psalms 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18

Ephesians 4:1-6

John 6:1-15

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Thousands of people followed Jesus across the Sea of Galilee. At their destination, the people were hungry. Jesus could understand the hunger gnawing at their bellies and was filled with compassion for them. Using the five loaves and two fish a child graciously offered to him, Jesus fed the multitudes. Jesus performed this miracle for his people out of compassion and deep love for his followers; he wished to care for them and did just that. Like Jesus, we are called to have compassion for the poor, and to feed the hungry. Having compassion for and caring for others is a fundamental expression of our faith; we are called to be like Christ.

**Q FOCUS:** *Jesus meets all our needs.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

The Church remembers St. Joachim and St. Anne on July 26. Although we do not have scriptural evidence of Joachim and Anne, Catholic tradition says that these were the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. While we know nothing factual about them, we believe that God must have blessed them in their raising of the Blessed Virgin. Mary was set apart from birth, as one conceived without sin. The Spirit of God must have been present in that moment and in the life of this family as Joachim and Anne taught their holy daughter the Jewish faith and modeled compassion and love in their actions.

### Church Teaching Connection

"It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter. He comes not from above, but from within, he comes that we might find him in this world of ours" (*Laudato si'*, 236).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

### Gospel

John 6:1-15

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near. When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have

a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people recline." Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat. When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world." Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

Food is essential to life. In our modern Western society, food is abundant. It is so abundant, in fact, that most Americans do not know about food insecurity, and they have not lived through famine or starvation. In Jesus' time, food was a precious commodity. People were protective of food and did not always know from where their next meal would come. Food was grown by families, and from earliest childhood, people understood that one had to ensure a food supply for one's family. People worked hard for food and they migrated to be near food.

► Do you think these thousands of people thought about where they would be getting their dinner when they followed Jesus?

► Have you ever been so caught up in something that you forgot to eat?

The crowd followed Jesus across the Sea of Galilee. They were probably not thinking about where they would get their next meal, but they were hungering for a different kind of nourishment: the Bread of Life, Jesus. Jesus knows this is why they followed him, but he still was aware of their human needs and wanted to provide for them. Paying for food for all of those people was next to impossible. However, there was a child present who had five loaves of bread and two fish. Clearly this wasn't enough food to feed thousands, but Jesus blessed the food, and it was distributed to the thousands. He used this miracle to demonstrate God's abundant generosity and concern for human needs.

► Can you imagine what it was like for the disciples, as they watched a small amount of bread and fish stretch to feed thousands?

This Gospel reading clearly illustrates Jesus' divine identity. This was an astonishing miracle, and those who witnessed it surely were amazed. What is truly beautiful though, is that God saw the crowd and had concern for their human need and human discomfort. Our Lord looked at the crowd and had empathy for his people. He responds to that need. Everyone was satisfied *and* there was still food left over.

Our Lord looks to always take care of our needs. He cares deeply for us, and loves each one of us, his children. God sees us, he hears us, and understands our needs, our pain, and our joy.

► When you consider that the maker of the universe cares for you and your human needs, what do you think? How do you feel?

► How can you show others this same care and concern?

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 234.*

**The miracle of the loaves and the fish illustrates Jesus' divine nature and the abundance of God's grace.**

**Concerned for the physical safety and comfort of his people, Jesus miraculously fed thousands of people.**

**We too care called to have concern and care for our brothers and sisters.**

## Act on the Word

### Feeding the Hungry

*You will need have a list of food banks and other similar services in your area. If your parish supports a local food pantry, contact someone there and invite them to come speak with your class about their work. You should allow the use of smartphones, tablets, or computers during class so that the young people can do research.*

In the United States today, most people have not experienced the sickening fear of famine, the unfulfilled hunger of ration, the pinch of shortage, or slow agony of starvation. That fact doesn't mean that our communities are without hunger and suffering. Americans may rarely see starvation deaths, but many people suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

If you invited a speaker from a local food pantry, have them share information about their services, how they operate, and information about hunger in your community. Ask the presenter to focus on the root causes of poverty and food insufficiency in your

area, and how people are banding together to help others. Allow the young people the opportunity to ask questions. Then have the young people break into groups to discover more about how hungry people in your region obtain food. Provide them with a list of local food banks to research. What organizations assist those who cannot obtain food without assistance? How do people support these services? What kind of volunteers are they looking for?

Challenge the young people to develop a plan of action so that they can support one of these local organizations. (If your parish already supports a local food pantry, have their contributions go to that organization.) Maybe they will decide to hold a canned food drive. Perhaps they can give up one Saturday each month to volunteer at the organization. Encourage them to make these contributions out of their own time and resources, following Jesus' example of self-giving.

### Closing Prayer

*God of abundant life,  
you feed us through Word and sacrament.  
Help us to keep prayers of thanksgiving on our lips,  
always realizing that you answer our every need.  
We place our complete trust in you now  
and always  
as we pray through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

### For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*