

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time A

LECTIO DIVINA (Divine Reading): It is a traditional monastic practice of Scriptural Reading, meditation, and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word. It is not a bible study but a prayerful reading of the Sunday Liturgy of the Word of God and Meditating and Responding to God's word during the week

First reading: A reading from the book of Isaiah 55:1-3 *Thus says the LORD: All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life. I will renew with you the everlasting covenant, the benefits assured to David.*

Explanation: In the first reading Isaiah consoles the Jewish exiles in Babylon, assuring them of their return to homeland and promising them that Yahweh their God alone can and will provide for their spiritual and physical needs. Food lasts only a short time and meets only physical needs but God offers us free nourishment that feeds our soul. How do we get it? We come (1) listen (2), seek and call on God (6). God's salvation is freely offered but to nourish our souls, we must eagerly receive it. Spiritual starvation happens when there is no God like the physical starvation without daily bread.

Psalm 145

R. (cf. 16) **The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.**

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.

The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.

R. **The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.**

The eyes of all look hopefully to you, and you give them their food in due season; you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

R. **The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.**

The LORD is just in all his ways and holy in all his works.

The LORD is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.

R. **The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.**

Explanation: David in this psalm teaches "Because God is full of love, He satisfies all who trust Him. He says that God is able to lift us up because He is our sources of all our daily needs, He is righteous and loving in all his dealings and He remains near to those who call on Him

Second Reading: A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans 8: 35, 37-39 **Brothers and sisters:** What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Explanation: These verses in the second reading contain one of the most comforting promises in all Scripture. Believers have always had to face hardships in many forms: Persecution, illness, imprisonment and even death. These could cause them to feel abandoned by Christ. But Paul says that it is impossible to be separated from Christ because Jesus' death for us is proof of his unconquerable love. Nothing can stop Christ's constant presence within us. If we believe these overwhelming assurances, we will not be afraid. We are totally secure in Him.

Gospel Reading : A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 14:13-21 When Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their towns. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves." But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "Bring them here to me," and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children.

Explanation: In today's Gospel, Jesus demonstrates His caring love for us by feeding the people, spiritually by His preaching and physically by the miraculous multiplication of five loaves and two fish to thousands. This miracle shows the Divinity of Jesus, the providing care of God and the compassion of Jesus for the crowd. It is a Messianic sign, presenting Jesus as the new Moses who fed the Israelites in the desert and the new Elisha who miraculously fed the starving people of Gilgal (2 Kings 4:2-44). In the Holy Eucharist, He feeds our mind and heart through His life-giving words and fills our soul by giving His Body and Blood as our spiritual food and drink. Points for meditation: When Jesus saw something of the crowd who followed him, he was moved with pity for them. On the other hand, the disciples were insensitive to them. Today's Gospel urges us to feel compassion for the most needy and to meet their needs from our own scarce resources. If we allow Jesus to make use of our possessions for those who have less than we have, we will see the compassion of Jesus and we will witness stupendous miracles.

Personal questions to Ponder and Respond: Do we try to extend gestures of solidarity toward those who are close to us along the journey of life? In the face of very concrete problems of our friends or relatives, do we know how to offer our help and our availability to collaborate to find a solution? Before breaking the bread, Jesus raised His eyes to heaven: do we know how to thank the Lord for the daily gift of bread? Do we know how to share our goods with others, especially with the poorest? Do we share our life with the poorest or just share from our excess? Do we know of their lives personally or just from the news, statistics, or the internet?