THERE IS NO NEED FOR THEM TO GO AWAY; Give them some food yourselves.

MATTHEW 14:16

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME AUGUST 2, 2020
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekly Scripture

Sunday, August 2
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is 55:1-3
Ps 145:8-9, 15-16, 17-18
Rom 8:35, 37-39
Mt 14:13-21

Monday, August 3
Weekday
Dt 119:29, 43, 79, 80, 95, 102
Mt 14:22-36

Tuesday, August 4
Memorial of Saint John Vianney, Priest
Jer 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22
Ps 102:16-18, 19-21, 29 and 22-23
Mt 14:22-36 or
Mt 15:1-2, 10-14

Wednesday, August 5
Weekday
Jer 31:1-7
Jer 31:10, 11-12ab, 13
Mt 15:21-28

Thursday, August 6
Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord
Dn 7:9-10, 13-14
2 Pet 1:16-19
Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 9
Mt 17:1-9

First Friday, August 7
Weekday
Na 2:1, 3; 3:1-3, 6-7
Dt 32:35cd-36ab, 39abcd, 41
Mt 16:24-28

Saturday, August 8
Memorial of Saint Dominic, Priest
Hb 1:12–2:4
Ps 9:8-9, 10-11, 12-13
Mt 17:14-20

The Compassion of an Abundant Feast
Reflection on Matthew 14:22-36

Today we jump ahead in our reading of Matthew’s Gospel to Chapter 14. Last week we heard Jesus conclude his discourse with the crowds about the Kingdom of Heaven. In Matthew’s narrative, Jesus then leaves the crowds and returns to Nazareth, where he is rejected. Matthew then recounts the story of John the Baptist’s arrest and execution at the hands of Herod. Today’s Gospel reading begins at this point.

Upon hearing the news of the death of John the Baptist, Jesus seeks to withdraw, but the crowds follow him. Jesus reaches out to them in compassion and heals the sick. At the end of a long day, the disciples encourage Jesus to send the crowds away so that they might find provisions for themselves. Jesus again responds with compassion for the crowd. Jesus tells his disciples to provide food for the crowd. The disciples reply with a report of the meagerness of their own provisions—five loaves and two fish. The result is the very familiar miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish. Matthew’s Gospel tells us that 5,000 men were fed, and this number does not even include the women and children.

Jesus’ blessing brought abundance from the meager provisions of the disciples. In this action, Jesus offers us a sign of the Kingdom of Heaven that he has been teaching about in the parables. A feast results from the smallest of portions—remember the mustard seed and the yeast. In this miracle we witness an example for Christian life and ministry. Even the smallest of offerings can produce abundant results when placed in the service of the Kingdom of Heaven.

We find the story of Jesus’ multiplication of the loaves and the fish in each of the four Gospels. In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, Jesus performs this same miracle on two separate occasions. The story of this miracle is an anticipation of the Eucharist in which we are fed by the abundant grace of God. The importance of the Eucharist has been a defining element of Christian life from the very beginning.

St. John Vianney
Patron Saint of Priests • August 4

A Prayer for Priests

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests. Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom. Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel. Allow them to experience joy in their ministry. Help them to become instruments of your divine grace.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest.

Amen.

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