



AMDG
18TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR B
1ST AUGUST 2021



Christ, the Bread of Life

OPENING PRAYER

Draw near to your servants, O Lord,
and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness,
that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide,
you may restore what you have created
and keep safe what you have restored.

This is the first of several Sunday Gospels where we contemplate Jesus's teaching on the bread of life. It follows last week's account of the feeding of the five thousand.

The *First Reading* tells us of the hungry, grumbling Israelites in the desert and the gift of manna that God sends them.

The *Psalms* echoes this event, 'he gave them manna from heaven. Mere mortals ate the bread of angels'.

The message of the *Second Reading*, following the sections from Ephesians, links in with the new way of life demanded when we follow the discipleship of Jesus.

In the *Gospel*, the crowd have been searching for Jesus, perhaps wanting more of the physical bread he has given them. Jesus's teaching appeals to their deeper, spiritual hunger.

In our prayer this week, we can turn to God, knowing that, whatever the situation, he will always provide for his people. May it lead us also to a greater appreciation of the Eucharist.

FIRST READING EXODUS 16: 2–4, 12–15 (part)

The whole community of the sons of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron and said, ‘Why did we not die at the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we were able to sit down to pans of meat!’ The Lord said to Moses, ‘Now I will rain down bread for you from the heavens. Each day the people are to go out and gather the day’s portion. I propose to test them in this way to see whether they will follow my law or not. I have heard their complaints. Say this to them, “Between the two evenings you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have bread to your heart’s content. Then you will learn that I, the Lord, am your God.”’

And so it came about: quails flew up in the evening, and they covered the camp; in the morning there was a coating of dew all round the camp. When it lifted, there on the surface of the desert was a thing delicate, powdery, as fine as hoarfrost on the ground. When they saw this the sons of Israel said to one another, ‘What is that?’ not knowing what it was. ‘That’, said Moses to them, ‘is the bread the Lord gives you to eat.’

I come to my place of prayer and place myself in God’s presence, breathing in his love and mercy.

When I am ready, I read the text a couple of times.

I consider this event, perhaps sympathising with the people who hanker for the comforts of Egypt, bored and hungry in the desert.

When do I feel dissatisfied because of present hardship, or when am I over-critical and uncooperative?

I pause to consider what I can thank God for.

What are the blessings I forget, the answers to prayer that I ignore, the beauty in the people and the world that surrounds me ...?

I turn to God, remembering the hungry of the world, the suffering and the bereaved.

In what ways can he work through me to bring bread and comfort to others?

I close my prayer with a slow ‘*Our Father*’.

GOSPEL JOHN 6: 24–35 (part)

When the people saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there they crossed to Capernaum to look for him. They said to him, ‘Rabbi, when did you come here?’ Jesus answered: ‘I tell you, you are not looking for me because you have seen the signs but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat. Do not work for food that cannot last, but for food that endures to eternal life, the kind the Son of Man is offering you, for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal.

They said, ‘What must we do if we are to do the works that God wants?’ Jesus answered, ‘You must believe in the one he sent’. So they said, ‘What work will you do? Our fathers had manna to eat in the desert.’ Jesus answered: ‘It was not Moses but my Father who gives you bread from heaven, the true bread; for the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world’. ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘give us that bread always.’ Jesus answered: ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst.’

As I prepare to pray, I relax my body and mind.

I become aware once again of being in God’s loving presence. I take the time to be open and receptive, asking the Holy Spirit to help me pray.

I imagine the crowd looking for Jesus, perhaps wondering how he had escaped them. I am here too, looking for him, perhaps with my own questions ...

They call him ‘Rabbi’, Teacher.

I join them sitting at his feet to learn from him. What am I hungry for?

Answers to material concerns ... peace of mind ... deeper understanding of what I should do ... closer union with him ... or something else ...?

I speak to him from my heart, being honest and trusting that he accepts me as I am.

Maybe Jesus reminds me that he is the bread of life, feeding me in many ways.

I ponder what his great gift means to me.

I end my prayer in a spirit of gratitude.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Learn that I, the Lord, am your God.

First Reading

Mere mortals ate the bread of angels.

Psalm

I am the bread of life.

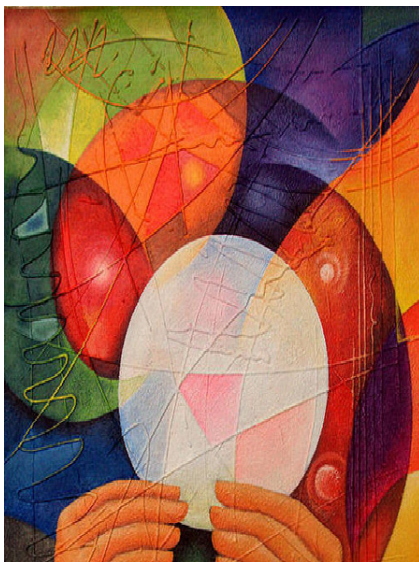
He who comes to me will never be hungry;
he who believes in me will never thirst.

Gospel

This week's texts if you want to explore further:

Exodus 16: 2-4, 12-15; Ps 77 (78); Ephesians 4: 17, 20-24; John 6: 24-35

*The Bread of Life by Hermel Alejandr
(Philippines)*



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
Ministries



Prepared by St Beuno's Outreach in the Diocese of Wrexham

LDS