

## Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), Year C

### GOSPEL

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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 here.' He replied, 'Give them something to eat yourselves.' 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.

(Luke 9:11-17)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The actions of our eucharistic celebration are based on Jesus' actions in this gospel text and later during the Last Supper. These actions involve the priest taking the bread, blessing it, breaking it and distributing it to all who come to the table.
- The twelve baskets full of remaining food signify that the Eucharist can meet all our needs. The abundance of the Eucharist is enough—indeed, more than enough—to fill and sustain us.
- The abundant feast is an image associated with the coming of the Messiah and the advent of God's kingdom. In this gospel text, Jesus brings an experience of God's reign in the present time to those whom he fed in such abundance.

### EXPLORING THE WORD

Jesus' attitude towards the crowd starkly contrasts that of the Twelve. Jesus welcomes all who come to him, patiently explains his message of the kingdom and offers healing to all those in need of it. In contrast, the Twelve are anxious about their paucity of resources and suggest that the crowd be sent away to find their own nourishment. Jesus then presents a model of how they should respond: with generosity and trust in God. Significantly, Jesus hands the food back to the apostles to distribute among the crowd—that is, they are given the ministry of feeding the multitude. For Luke, the Twelve are the foundation of the Church. This Church, founded on the Twelve, must never stop nourishing those who come seeking healing and the kingdom. The Church is founded on its members, so each one of us is responsible for using what resources we have to meet the needs of others.

- What are some implications of this understanding of the text?
- Are these implications confined to our immediate community or are they global in scope? How does this understanding of the text challenge us further?
- In what ways are the Church and its members helping to meet your needs in the present?
- In what ways are the Church and its members helping to meet the needs of the world?

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Have you ever been in a 'lonely place'?
- How do you make people welcome?
- What needs healing in you?
- How is your 'hunger' being fed by Jesus?
- Jesus tells the disciples that they should feed the crowd themselves. What resources do you have to offer that may help feed the needs of those people you know? Share a story of a time when you were able to help someone in their time of need. Share a story of a time when someone was able to help you.
- Spend a little time each day reflecting on your needs and how your journey towards Christ is helping to feed those needs. Try to help someone find a way out of their 'lonely place'.
- This week's gospel acclamation makes a beautiful reflection. Pray it often:

*I am the living bread from heaven, says the Lord;  
Whoever eats this bread will live forever.*

