

# Ordinary Time XVIII Sunday [Year A]

**Introduction:** The central theme of today's readings is that God takes care of our physical and spiritual needs if we put our trust in Him. He shares with us Jesus as our Savior and spiritual food, in Word and in Eucharist, thus preparing us for the Heavenly banquet, and challenges us to share our blessings with others.

**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. He will pardon their sins and will offer them participation in His eschatological banquet.

**In the second reading,** Paul argues that since God's love for us is so immense and infinite, *"nothing can come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

**In today's Gospel,** Jesus demonstrates God's caring love for us by feeding the people, spiritually by his preaching and physically by the miraculous multiplication of five loaves and two fish, which the apostles had brought for their lunch and which they gave Jesus to feed the people. 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 42-44). The Eucharistic wordings used, and the promise made by Jesus on the following day, that he would give his body and blood as food and drink (John 6:25-70), make the miracle a prefiguring symbol of the Holy Eucharist.

**Life messages:** 1) We need to nourish our souls with Jesus in Word and Sacrament. We nourish our souls with the Word of God (by listening to God through reading the Bible) and with the Bread of Life (by receiving Jesus in Holy Communion). We need to find time to be with Christ both in personal and family prayer and in Adoration of the Eucharist whenever this is available. One way of listening to God is to read a passage in the Bible until it speaks to the heart, then stop to reflect on the message God is conveying to our hearts. The next step is to respond to God by

prayer, which is talking to Him, as to a friend in conversation, telling Him everything and asking Him for whatever we need.

2) We need to be “Eucharistic ministers:” We too, can perform miracles in our own time and place, by imitating the four “Eucharistic actions” of Jesus: take humbly and generously what God gives us, bless it by offering it to others in God’s love, break away from our own needs and selfish interests for the sake of others, give with joy-filled gratitude to God who has blessed us with so much.

3) We need to be generous in sharing God’s blessings: We need to share our blessings with others around us, generously and sacrificially, in order to alleviate their spiritual and physical hunger. God lavishly blesses the large-hearted, who generously and sacrificially share their resources with others.