



1 Some time after this Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee - or of Tiberias - **2** and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. **3** Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. **4** It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

5 Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' **6** He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. **7** Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' **8** One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, **9** 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' **10** Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. **11** Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. **12** When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' **13** So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. **14** The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' **15** Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

Other readings: 2 Kings 4:42-44 Psalm 144 (145) Ephesians 4:1-6

For the next few weeks our regular reading of the Gospel of Mark is interrupted as we read the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. The chapter begins with the multiplication of the loaves, which is followed by extended words of Jesus in dialogue with the Jews.

The multiplication of the loaves and fishes, found in all the gospels, is in John's gospel one of the great signs. Seeing this 'sign' the people acclaim Jesus as a prophet, and there is a risk they will take him off to make him a king.

The miracle of Elisha narrated in the first reading serves to prepare for the greater sign worked by Jesus. The deeper sense of the sign will be explained by Jesus in the verses which follow.

Why is this miracle so important to all four evangelists?

How can we avoid misunderstanding the signs worked by Jesus?

Let us pray for true solidarity with those in need.

Let us pray for those who work that the hungry may be fed and that unjust structures may be challenged.