



Year C **Luke 9:11-17**

11 Jesus made the crowds welcome and talked to them about the kingdom of God; he cured those who were in need of healing.

12 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.' 13 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.' 14 For there were about five thousand men. But he said to his disciples, 'Get them to sit down in parties of about fifty.' 15 They did so and made them all sit down. 16 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. 17 They all ate as much as they wanted, and when the scraps remaining were collected they filled twelve baskets.

Other readings: Genesis 14:18-20 Psalm 109 (110) 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord, which we know also as Corpus Christi, gives us an opportunity to revisit the events of Holy Thursday. That day was full of material to ponder, and, now that Lent and Easter are complete, this feast provides an opportunity for deeper reflection on the mystery of the Eucharist instituted by Christ on the night before he died.

Jesus acknowledges the need of the crowd and shows compassion for them. He 'makes them welcome', speaks to them about the Kingdom of God, and heals the sick. This attitude of Jesus contrasts with that of the Twelve, who are insistent that the crowds be sent away. Jesus' reply to this is: 'Give them something to eat yourselves.' The Christian, like Jesus, must recognise the needs, both material and spiritual, of those who are searching for the Kingdom.

The narrative of the miracle itself, especially in the detail of the actions of Jesus in verse 16, clearly prepares for the Last Supper. The miracle of the loaves, then, does not only look back to God's past provision for the people, such as the provision of manna in the desert, but also points to the Eucharist and to the self-giving of Christ on the cross.

St Paul reminds us explicitly of what Jesus did 'on the night that he was betrayed'. He gives us not an earthly bread, but the bread which is the gift of himself that we might live.

How can we conform our lives to the self-giving of Christ in the Eucharist?

What might Jesus' words to 'give them something to eat yourselves' suggest to us today?

Pray for true reverence for the gift of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

Pray for a deeper understanding that it is the Eucharist which makes the Church.