

Missionary Commentary

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 28, 2024

Sunday Readings

2 Kings 4:42-44
Psalm 145:10-18
Ephesians 4:1-6
John 6:1-5

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Becoming the Eucharist

Our beautiful Gospel today is taken from the beginning of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, frequently called the “Bread of Life” chapter. It is noteworthy that accounts of Jesus feeding the multitudes are found in *all four Gospels* (Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-38; Mk 6:30-44; 8:1-10; Lk 9:13-17; Jn 6:1-13). In addition, Jesus’ action clearly symbolizes the Eucharistic meal through which Jesus feeds our hungers with his own body and blood.

For our reflection today, let us meditate on Jesus’ Eucharistic action at the Last Supper as it is narrated in the Gospel: “During the meal Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples” (Mt 26:26). Four key words capture Jesus’ action. Yes, they refer to the bread; however, they can also refer to Jesus’ action in our own lives. Like the bread, we are *taken, blessed, broken, and given*.

Mystery of Choosing. We have been called and chosen by Christ to be his friends and companions. We are just ordinary people; we have no special gifts. We come from average families and simple origins. Yet, in God’s loving plan, he has chosen us to serve the coming of His Kingdom. We, even with our unworthiness, have been freely selected to be Jesus’ disciples and to go forth and bear much fruit. We marvel at God’s initiative!

Miracle of Blessing. When we reflect on our lives, we realize that we have received so many blessings from the Lord. We recall our families and friends, our health, our intelligence, our education, our countless opportunities in life. God is generous and loves us deeply; thus, we never doubt our self-worth. His goodness and kindness follow us all the days of our lives; His love endures forever.

Paradox of Breaking. We all have known real sorrow in our lives; we have experienced suffering and pain. Our health may be diminished; we may have borne the death of a loved one. We may have been misunderstood, rejected, or the victim of gossip. We know our own limitations and failures. Yet, we also know that being broken does *not* change the fact that we have been chosen and blessed. Our brokenness actually prepares for God’s next action in our lives.

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Wonder of Giving. We recall that bread must be broken so that it can be shared and given as food for others. Taken, blessed, and broken, we are now shared and distributed. Thus, our lives can provide nourishment, strength, and consolation for others. We seek to surrender to God's loving plan for us. We know that God's love endures forever; we are to be instruments of that love for others—each and every day.

Synthesis. Jesus invites us and challenges us to *become Eucharistic persons*, whom he will use for his mission. Truly the four actions (take, bless, break, give) are present as Jesus feeds the multitudes. They are present in the Mass, the Eucharist. They are present in our own lives and persons. Friends, *become the Eucharist!*

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

2 Kings 4:42-44 — Today's first reading narrates an event in the life of prophet Elisha (Ninth Century, BC). It is a story of a farmer who brings fresh grain and bread to the prophet; a miracle of feeding the multitudes follows.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 145:10-18 — This psalm reflects how the Lord cares for his people; the psalm response merits our ongoing reflection: "The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs."

Second Reading

Ephesians 4:1-6 — Here Saint Paul, writing from prison, speaks of the kind of life a Christian is called to live. We are summoned to live in humility, meekness, and patience, always seeking to preserve unity in the Body of Christ, the Church.

Gospel

John 6:1-15 — Although this liturgical year (B) focuses on the short Gospel of Mark, for five Sundays we are treated to selections from the Gospel of John, focusing on the "Bread of Life" theme. Notice that when Jesus feeds the crowds, there is plenty for everyone—with such an abundance that there are many leftovers!

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James Kroeger, author of [Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language](#) (Orbis Books – 2023), which recently won First Place from the Catholic Media Association in the category for "Books on Pope Francis."

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