



St. Patrick's Anglican Church

4797Curtis Blvd. Port ST John FL 32927

The Seventh Sunday in Trinity
Aug 3, 2025

The passage selected for the Sermon today is taken from the Gospel:

“I have compassion on the multitude, for they have been with me three days, and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way” St. Mark 8:2-4

In this passage, Jesus turns to his disciples and asks them to feed His sheep. These are the same disciples that have been with Jesus throughout His Ministry. They have confessed Him as the Messiah. They have even seen Him perform this exact same miracle with the loaves and the fishes. And yet they turn and helplessly ask, “From whence can a man satisfy these with bread here in the wilderness?”

The wilderness is an important theme in the history of salvation. Abraham was called to leave his old life and journeyed through the wilderness to start a new life. His willingness to go, his faith, was counted to him as righteousness. Moses led the Jews from Egypt through the wilderness to begin the new life of Israel under the covenant. Before He begins his public ministry, Jesus goes to the wilderness to confront the devil and is tempted to turn rocks into bread to feed Himself. He denied the devil. In this passage, Jesus turns for the second time to the multitude which has

followed him into the wilderness. He pities them, and He worries about their ability to journey home without fainting and falling by the way. He decides He will make bread for them so they can be sustained as they follow Him.

This backdrop of wilderness is a critical image in our own spiritual journey. Physically, the wilderness of the Holy Land is like high desert. Those of you that have visited New Mexico or Eastern California know the terrain. It is sage brush and Joshua trees, broken rock and craggy hills. The air is hot, and dry, and thin. It is a land with scorpions and snakes. It is a land empty of earthly lushness, a moonscape, a place of other worldliness. It is a place of challenge, and metaphorically, it is the place of Spiritual challenge, the dominion of the devil

This particular trip to the desert hearkens back to the journeys of Abraham and Moses. It is a call to, and preparation for, the New Covenant. It is no accident that the crowd has been on his heels for three days. When we reflect for just a moment, the significance of the three days strikes us. This particular three-day trek looks forward to that three day journey into the dominion of the devil, and the desert of death, that will happen from Good Friday to Easter. The faintness Jesus anticipates of this crowd is also the faint heartedness He knows

the disciples will exhibit on the trek from His Crucifixion to His Resurrection. It is the faintness of heart He knows we feel when we try to pierce the veil and look beyond the sickness and death that surround us as we traverse our personal spiritual wilderness.

How can we, who live in lush, green, tropical Florida relate to this wilderness. We relate because we too live in our personal emotional and spiritual deserts. The desert of our lives is the Spiritual desert that we create by our unwillingness to confess our own sins and forgive those who sin against us. Our private landscape is stripped of beauty and abundance by our selfishness. The air of our private desert is heated by the anger of grudges we won't let go. The poisonous beasts of our private desert are the hurtful words that spring and sting so easily from our mouths. We are journeying through this private desert toward a better place, a place Jesus has prepared for us. He has looked upon us, and pitied us, because he knows that we won't survive as we follow Him through this place without some special grace. He intervenes to overcome our environment and our nature by nourishing us with Bread from Heaven.

From the Cross, that three-day journey looked bleak to the Apostles. From our sickbeds and gravesides, the journey still fills us with dread. How do we find nourishment, fulfillment, and even life itself, in that fearsome desert that seemed to swallow even the source of Life? The answer is through Jesus. He takes His very Body, and makes it Bread for us, to nourish us in our journey. What in human eyes seemed inadequate and doomed, in the face of the Cross is mystically transformed, Resurrected, and given to us to feed us in our need. We believe this, even though the mystery

of how it does so overwhelms the boundaries of our understanding.

This miracle is recorded to teach us the essential nature of Eucharistic grace for our survival as we make this spiritual journey.

That multitude would have fainted physically. His disciples, his Apostles, even Peter who confessed Him as the Messiah, would also faint in spirit on Good Friday. Though we are baptized and filled with His Word, we will also faint on our journey through this life and death unless we are fed with the Bread of Heaven, which is His very Body. There is no doubt that the Bread of the wilderness is the bread of the covenant. In the same words that Jesus used at the Last Supper, and we use in the consecration, He tells us that it is. He takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to us in mystical abundance, filling all who eat, and then overflowing the world with life from what seemed to be merely bread before its transformation.

We have the opportunity to be nourished by the Eucharist so we can persevere as we contend with the wilderness, so that we don't faint before we can get home to Jesus. We will be offered this very Bread of Heaven in just a few minutes. We should receive it in our hearts by faith with Thanksgiving.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen