

Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

They will eat.

First Reading

You grant our desires.

Psalm

I implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. *Second Reading*

'If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one.'

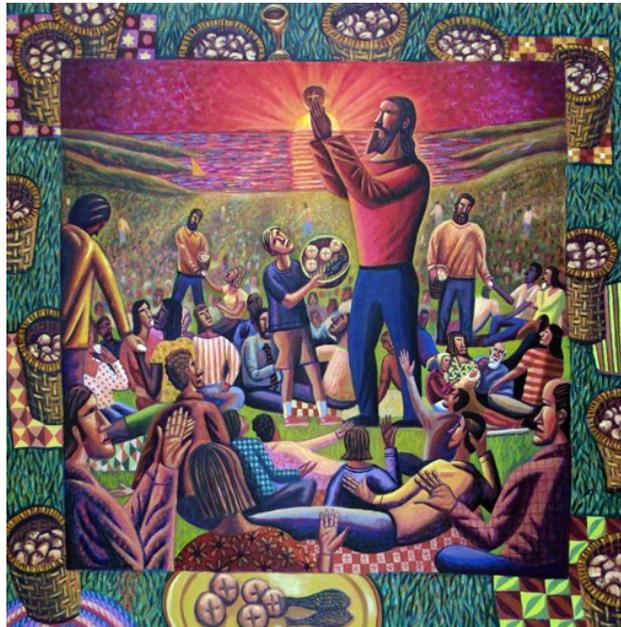
St Teresa of Calcutta

God our Father and protector,
without you nothing is holy, nothing has value.

Guide us to everlasting life
by helping us to use wisely
the blessings you have given to the world.

Old Opening Prayer

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
2 Kings 4: 42–44; Psalm 144 (145); Ephesians 4: 1–6; John 6: 1–15



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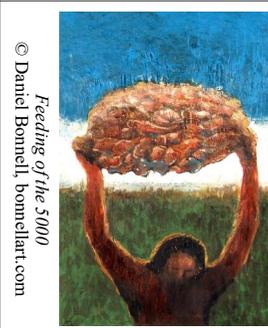
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ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Year B, 25th July 2021

'His hands were as earth
beneath the bread
and his voice was as thunder above it'

St Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373)



This Sunday's readings remind us that God provides for us physically as well as spiritually.

In the **First Reading**, Elisha assures his servant that one hundred people will be fed with just twenty barley loaves because the Lord has promised it, while the **Psalmist** praises the Lord who, by feeding us from his own hand, 'answers all our needs'.

St Paul, writing to the Church at Ephesus (**Second Reading**), assures the Christian community that, despite any evidence to the contrary, God, who unifies the people, is in control.

The three readings are brought together in the **Gospel** account of the Feeding of the Five Thousand (which is a foreshadowing of the Eucharist and the only miracle of Jesus that is recounted in all four gospels). Not only does Jesus outdo Elisha's miracle, he demonstrates that, by feeding the people from his own divine hands, God is unifying the people through meeting their need.

Let's pray, this week, that we might know ourselves to be in the hands of the Lord, and that our lives may bear abundant fruit as a result.

Opening Prayer

O God, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy,
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us
and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide,
we may use the good things that pass
in such a way as to hold fast even now
to those that ever endure.

Psalm 144 (145)

R./ You open wide your hand, O Lord, and grant our desires.

All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign
and declare your might, O God.

The eyes of all creatures look to you
and you give them their food in due time.
You open wide your hand,
grant the desires of all who live.

The Lord is just in all his ways,
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts.

As I ready myself for this time of prayer, I let myself become still.
I'm prepared to wait. I allow my breathing to slow, my posture to
become comfortable, my mind to settle.

I read the psalm, a few times, slowly. I don't rush. Like the '*eyes of all
creatures*', I look to the Lord, expectant but patient.

Perhaps it would be beneficial to begin as the psalm begins, from a place
of gratitude. As 'creature' – God's own creation – for what do I wish to
thank the Lord?

Or, as friend of the Lord, can I name any blessing given to me?
What is coming to mind ...?

My initial focus might be on God. So I ask myself:
What does the '*glory*' of the Lord look like, for me ...?
What about the '*might*' of God ...? Or *God's justice*?

How have I experienced the *loving deeds* of the Lord in my life?
I ponder....

I might then be drawn to that word 'desire'. What are the desires of my
heart? What is their place within the open hand of the Lord?
I stay with this for a while.

When ready to end my prayer, I might like simply to remain 'close' to the
Lord as I call on him, talk to him, from my heart.

Gospel Mark 4: 35–41

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to
Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to
eat?' Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy
enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples,
Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here
with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so
many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.'
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. When they had eaten enough, he said
to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets
wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with
scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people,
seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet
who is to come into the world.' 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.

In this familiar gospel Jesus gives thanks. So I, too, pause to give thanks
for what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do for me.

I stay with my breathing for a few moments. I read, pause and wait ...

I might like to pray imaginatively, entering the scene. Or I could allow
certain words and phrases to speak to me. Is anything drawing me
now ...? Perhaps those first two words? Jesus '*looked up*': he noticed.
In what direction are my own eyes turned? Do I see the needs of others?

Is the smallness of the boy and the scarcity of his offering saying
something to me about my own apparent limitedness? I ponder what
the Lord might be able to do with the gift I offer, however small.

What about the crowd 'sitting ready'? Am I ready to receive what the
Lord wants to give me?

Jesus tells the disciples to ensure that nothing is wasted. What is this
saying to me? I gaze at the twelve hampers, perhaps wondering at
Jesus's abundant provision. His offerings of love, care and grace are
never scarce. From such gifts received, what can I share with others?

I rest in God's love for me, ending my prayer slowly: *Our Father ...*