

In this reading Paul expresses his anguish and sorrow that so many of the children of Israel, the people especially favored by God, have not found the Lord's promise. To them belong the covenants, the law, and so much else. From their nation Christ himself came. Paul would go to great lengths, even see himself an outcast, if such would help Israel to know its salvation. Later in this letter Paul tries to explain how this all may be part of God's plan of redemption, which in the end will include Israel with the Gentiles.

And now these words from Paul's letter to the Romans

I speak the truth in Christ - I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit - I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Matthew 14:13-21

Our gospel is the story of Jesus' feeding of over five thousand persons. After the death of John the Baptist, Jesus seeks a time of retreat. The crowds, however, follow him, and he has compassion on them. The narrative suggests many levels of meaning. It recalls Old Testament stories, especially God's feeding of the Israelites with manna in the wilderness, and points forward to the legendary banquet at the end of time where Christ the King will preside. The abundant miracle illustrates Jesus' lordship; he is intimate with the powers of creation. Other themes associated with the Eucharist are close at hand.

Hear now these words from the gospel of Matthew

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

"Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.

