

# Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ (June 23): "**All ate and were satisfied**"

**Gospel Reading:** *Luke 9:11-17*

11 When the crowds learned it, they followed him; and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing. 12 Now the day began to wear away; and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away, to go into the villages and country round about, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a lonely place." 13 But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish -- unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." 14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each." 15 And they did so, and made them all sit down. 16 And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. 17 And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

**Meditation:** Do you hunger for God and for the abundant life he offers you through Jesus Christ? Jesus' feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. What is the significance of this miracle? The miraculous feeding of such a great multitude pointed to God's provision of *manna* (bread) in the wilderness for the people of Israel under Moses' leadership. When the people complained to Moses that they would die of hunger in the barren wilderness, God told Moses that he would "rain bread from heaven" for them to eat (Exodus 16:4,11-12). The miraculous provision of bread foreshadows the true heavenly bread which Jesus offers his followers who believe in him. Jesus makes a claim only God can make: He is the "bread of life" (John 6:35) and the "true bread of heaven" that sustains us now and for all eternity (John 6:58).

***A sign of God's great generosity and goodness towards us***

Jesus' feeding of the five thousand is a sign of God's generous care and provision for his people. When God gives, he gives abundantly. He gives more than we need for ourselves so that we may have something to share with others, especially those in need. God takes the little we have and multiplies it for the good of others. Do you trust in God's provision for you and do you share freely with others, especially those who lack what they need?

***Jesus feeds us with the true bread of heaven***

Jesus' feeding of the five thousand points to the superabundance of the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Creator who made the earth fruitful to nourish and strengthen all his creatures. Melchizedek is an important Old Testament figure because he was both a priest and a king who offered a sacrifice of bread and wine to God on behalf of Abraham and his future offspring (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1-4). His offering prefigured the offering made by Jesus, our great high priest and king who gave a new and distinctive meaning to the blessing of the bread and the cup of wine when he instituted the "Lord's Supper" or "Eucharist" on the eve of his sacrifice on the cross (Hebrews 7:26; 9:11; 10:12).

On the eve of the exodus of the Jewish people from bondage in Egypt, God commanded his people to celebrate the Passover meal, with the blessing of unleavened bread and wine, and the

sacrificial offering of an unblemished lamb (Exodus 12:5-8). The blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts as a sign of God's protection from the avenging angel of death who passed over the homes sealed with the blood of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:7,13). Every year in commemoration of the Exodus deliverance the Jewish people celebrate a Passover meal with unleavened bread as a pledge of God's faithfulness to his promises (Exodus 12:14; see Paul's description of the Christian Passover in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8). The "cup of blessing" at the end of the Jewish Passover meal points to the messianic expectation when the future Redeemer, the Messiah King will come to rebuild his holy city Jerusalem.

### ***Jesus poured out his blood for us***

At Jesus' last supper meal, after he had poured the final blessing cup of wine and had given thanks to his Father in heaven, he gave it to his disciples and said, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27-28). Jesus did this as a memorial of his death, which would take place the next day on the cross of Calvary, and his resurrection which occurred on the third day - Easter morning. The shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross fulfilled once and for all the old covenant sacrifice of the paschal lamb at Passover time (Hebrews 10:11-14; 1 Corinthians 5:7: 1 Peter 1:18-19). That is why John the Baptist had prophetically called Jesus the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Jesus made himself an offering and sacrifice, a perfect gift that was truly pleasing to the Father in heaven. He "offered himself without blemish to God" (Hebrews 9:14) and "gave himself as a sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2). Jesus established the Lord's Supper and Eucharist as a memorial of his death and resurrection and he commanded his disciples to celebrate it until his return again in glory.

### ***"The food that makes us live for ever in Jesus Christ"***

When we receive from the Lord's table we unite ourselves to Jesus Christ, who makes us sharers in his body and blood. Ignatius of Antioch (35-107 A.D.) calls it the "one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live for ever in Jesus Christ" (*Ad Eph. 20,2*). This supernatural food is healing for both body and soul and strength for our journey heavenward.

When you approach the Table of the Lord, what do you expect to receive? Healing, pardon, comfort, and rest for your soul? The Lord has much more for us, more than we can ask or imagine. The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist is an intimate union with Christ. As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens us in charity and enables us to break with disordered attachments to creatures and to be more firmly rooted in the love of Christ. Do you hunger for the "bread of life"?

**OPENING PRAYER** "Lord Jesus, you nourish and sustain us with your very own presence and life. You are the "Bread of Life" and the "Cup of Salvation". May I always hunger for you and be satisfied in you alone." **Amen.**

**CLOSING PRAYER:-** Almighty God, kindle in the hearts of all men the true love of peace, and guide those who make decisions for the nations of the earth; that in tranquillity Your kingdom may go forward, till the earth be filled with the knowledge of Your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

