

by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. 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.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat 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.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / B

25 JULY 2021

READING THE SIGNS

One of the major themes of the first half of John's gospel is whether people have the capacity to understand the meaning of the signs that Jesus worked. Time and again, a sign is worked but only partially comprehended. In the coming weeks the true meaning of the feeding of the multitude will be our focus.

The ministry of Jesus was having enormous success. His healing of the sick had attracted such a crowd that 200 denarii (over half a year's wages for a labourer) would only be sufficient to give them a small piece of bread each. Like Elisha before him, Jesus will work with what is at hand so that the people will not go hungry. In both cases what is at hand is minimal, but the resulting surplus is a powerful sign of what can happen when the Lord is given room to work with what we have to offer. When Jesus is at work there is always more than is needed, just as the fullness of his identity and mission cannot be exhausted by the crowd's perception that he is a prophet and king.

Paul knew that the abundance of the life that we have received in baptism is meant to be shared. If we have understood the gift we have been given then we will understand that we too are called to be a sign for the world. Our unity and charity towards one another are a sign of the life we share in Jesus, the living bread and source of our lives.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

2 Kings 4: 42-44

A reading from the second book of the Kings.

They will eat and have some left over.

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing Elisha, the man of God, bread from the first-fruits, twenty barley loaves and fresh grain in the ear. 'Give it to the people to eat,' Elisha said. But his servant replied, 'How can I serve this to a hundred men?' 'Give it to the people to eat' he insisted 'for the Lord says this, "They will eat and have some left over." ' He served them; they ate and had some over, as the Lord had said.'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 144: 10-11, 15-18. R. v. 16

R. The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

1. 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. **R.**
2. 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. **R.**
3. 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. **R.**

SECOND READING

Eph 4: 1-6

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians.

There is one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one



Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, through all and within all.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lk 7: 16

Alleluia, alleluia!

A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Jn 6: 1-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

He distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted.

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee – or of Tiberias – and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave