

Sunday, August 1, 2021

Lectionary 18, Year B

Introduction

Apparently not satisfied by Jesus' feeding of thousands, some who were there press him for a sign of his power; perhaps it is daily manna they want. As always in John's gospel when people want a sign, Jesus offers himself. He is the bread come from heaven to give life to the world. He calls us to come to him and believe in him, and through that relationship to know the one who sent him.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, [☩] one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,
help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

**We question your ways when they differ from the ways
of the world in which we live.**

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

We take offense at your teachings and your ways.

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

Beloved people of God:
in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, [☩] the bread of life,
you are shown God's mercy:
you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, eternal goodness, immeasurable love, you place your gifts before us; we eat and are satisfied. Fill us and this world in all its need with the life that comes only from you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. One does not live by ¹ bread alone,* but by every word that comes from the ¹ mouth of God. *Alleluia.* (Matt. 4:4)

Readings and Psalm

Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15

The LORD gives manna in the wilderness

Psalm 78:23-29

God rained down manna from heaven; so mortals ate the bread of angels. (Ps. 78:24, 25)

Ephesians 4:1-16

Maintain the unity of the faith

John 6:24-35

Christ the bread of life

Semicontinuous First Reading and Psalm

2 Samuel 11:26--12:13a

David rebuked by the prophet Nathan

Psalm 51:1-12

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. (Ps. 51:1)

First Reading: Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15

A food crisis becomes a faith crisis for the Israelites in the wilderness. The hungry people forget God's saving work in the exodus, and they wish for the food they had in Egypt. Nevertheless, God miraculously meets their needs, with manna for bread and quail for meat.

²The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

³The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.”

⁹Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.’” ¹⁰And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the

cloud. ¹¹The LORD spoke to Moses and said, ¹²“I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

¹³In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.”

Psalm: Psalm 78:23-29

God rained down manna from heaven; so mortals ate the bread of angels. (Ps. 78:24, 25)

²³So God commanded the ¹ clouds above
and opened the ¹ doors of heaven,

²⁴**raining down manna upon ¹ them to eat
and giving them ¹ grain from heaven. R**

²⁵So mortals ate the ¹ bread of angels;
God provided for them ¹ food enough.

²⁶**The LORD caused the east wind to blow ¹ in the heavens
and powerfully led out ¹ the south wind,**

²⁷**raining down flesh upon ¹ them like dust
and flying birds like the sand ¹ of the seas,**

²⁸**letting them fall in the midst ¹ of the camp
and round a- ¹ bout the dwellings.**

²⁹So the people ate and ¹ were well filled,
for God gave them ¹ what they craved. R

Second Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

Christians share fundamental unity and diversity. Our unity consists in the one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. Our diversity is expressed in various forms of ministry whose goal is equipping the saints and building up Christ's one body.

¹I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

⁷But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it is said,
“When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive;
he gave gifts to his people.”

⁹(When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) ¹¹The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of

the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.¹⁴ We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Gospel: John 6:24-35

Many of the five thousand people Jesus fed in the wilderness continued to follow him throughout the countryside. Jesus challenges them to consider the real nature of their quest.

²⁴When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were [beside the sea,] they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" ²⁶Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." ²⁸Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" ²⁹Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? ³¹Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³²Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

³⁵Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Semicontinuous First Reading: 2 Samuel 11:26--12:13a

God sends the prophet Nathan to rebuke King David for his abuse of power in taking Bathsheba and killing her husband, Uriah. Confronted with his sin, David repents. This sin, however, marks the beginning of troubled times in David's family.

²⁶When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him.

²⁷When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son.

But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD,^{12:1} and the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had very many flocks and herds; ³but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." ⁵Then David's anger

was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; ⁶he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; ⁸I gave you your master’s house, and your master’s wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. ⁹Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. ¹¹Thus says the LORD: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun. ¹²For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.” ^{13a}David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.”

Semicontinuous Psalm: Psalm 51:1-12

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. (Ps. 51:1)

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your ¹ steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out ¹ my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through ¹ from my wickedness,
and cleanse me ¹ from my sin.**

³For I know ¹ my offenses,
and my sin is ev- ¹ er before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil ¹ in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right ¹ in your judgment. R**

⁵Indeed, I was born ¹ steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my ¹ mother’s womb.

⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth ¹ deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom ¹ deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I ¹ shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- ¹ er than snow.

⁸**Let me hear ¹ joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken ¹ may rejoice. R**

⁹Hide your face ¹ from my sins,
and blot out ¹ all my wickedness.

¹⁰**Create in me a clean ¹ heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- ¹ it within me.**

¹¹Cast me not away ¹ from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- ¹ it from me.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of ¹ your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- ¹ tiful Spirit. R**

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

You call your church to be the body of Christ. Awaken all the baptized to the gifts you provide for carrying out the work of ministry. Where the church is divided, knit us together and restore the unity of the faith. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You command the clouds above and cause the wind to blow in the heavens. Watch over deserts and wilderness places. Regenerate rainforests, defend species at risk of extinction, and strengthen the work of conservation organizations (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You summon leaders to respond to the needs of your people. Instill those who govern with patience when confronted with grievances and perseverance in seeking what promotes the well-being of the community. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You draw near to those who cry out for help. Feed those who are hungry, reassure those who are despairing, and accompany those who are imprisoned. Rain down the true bread from heaven that gives life to the world. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You receive all who come seeking a sign of grace. Make this congregation a place of hospitality for those accustomed to rejection. To those who have felt excluded here or elsewhere, prepare us to welcome them in the name of Christ. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You provide food that endures for eternal life. Sustain us each day with the bread of life until we are gathered with (*name/s and*) all the saints and feast together at your heavenly banquet. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Offering Prayer

Jesus, Bread of life,
you have set this table with your very self,
and called us to the feast of plenty.
Gather what has been sown among us,
and strengthen us in this meal.
Make us to be what we receive here,
your body for the life of the world.

Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.
Come!

Prayer after Communion

Jesus, Bread of life,
we have received from your table
more than we could ever ask.
As you have nourished us in this meal,
now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
In your name we pray.
Amen.

Blessing

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
☩ be upon you now and forever.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

Upcoming Commemorations

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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