

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

God is in his holy place,
God who unites those who dwell in his house;
he himself gives might and strength to his people.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

2 K 4:42-44

A reading from the second book of the Kings.
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

Response:

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

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

Ep 4:1-6

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

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

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life:
you have the message of eternal life.**

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Jn 6:1-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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 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.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,**

**who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.**

**I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins**

**and I look forward to the resurrection of
the dead and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings which we bring from the abundance of your gifts, that through the powerful working of your grace these most sacred mysteries may sanctify our present way of life and lead us to eternal gladness.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament, the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son; grant, we pray, that this gift, which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation.
Amen.



Stained glass window in St. Sulpice church (Fougères, France), depicting a biblical scene: miracle of Jesus Christ by feeding a crowd of 5,000 with just five loaves of bread and two small fish.

All four Gospels have at least one story of Jesus feeding the crowd. Mark and Matthew have two. The story is the same but, like good story tellers, each Gospel writer introduces subtle but important changes into his version. John's is the longest, as it includes a long dialogue about the meaning of the Bread of Life. We will read it over the next five Sundays.

The central part of today's Gospel is a conversation between Jesus and two of his disciples about how to get food for such a great crowd. John takes a special interest in two disciples who do not figure prominently in the other Gospels. Andrew is usually in his brother Peter's shadow and Philip seems to be his closest friend. Philip does a quick calculation of the price of bread and concludes it would cost about three months' wages to come anywhere close to feeding a crowd of that size. Andrew's mention of little boy with the lunch-box containing five small rolls and two little salted fish seems like a rather silly suggestion in the circumstances, and only highlights the lack of food available. The boy is like the man in today's first reading (2 Kings 4:42-44) who brought a gift of food to the prophet Elijah. Despite these three additional characters, Jesus is at the centre of the story. It is he who takes, gives thanks and distributes the bread. These actions reflect the celebration of the Eucharist, where the celebrant does exactly what Jesus does, taking the people's offering of bread and wine, giving thanks for it, breaking the bread and feeding the community with the food they brought, now transformed by the Spirit's action into the body and blood of Christ. Gathering the fragments 'so that nothing gets lost' also reflects the community's care for fragments of the holy bread after the celebration.

The story ends on a note of foreboding. The fickle crowd wants to make the one who has fed them their king. A year on, another crowd at another Passover will insist that they have no king but the Caesar. ■

REFLECT

Many scenes in the Gospel story depict meals taken in the company of Jesus. He ate with sinners and outcasts, including tax farmers collaborating with the Roman regime, as well as with the Pharisees, the religious professionals of the time. One of the special characteristics of Jesus was his indiscriminate table fellowship. Everyone was welcome at his table and he accepted everyone else's invitation. Today's Gospel shows this kind of fellowship. The only table is green grass but thousands of poor, hungry people are given a simple meal of bread and fish.

That remains the ideal. In the Orthodox Church, even tiny babies receive communion, a spoonful of the holy bread soaked in the blood of Christ. Yet in other ways, our table is not so open. Christians of other faiths, who may love the Lord even more than we do, may not come to communion: nor may people in complex 'second relationships.' But must such exclusion last forever? Pope Francis has invited the special Synod on the Family to consider whether there is any way the invitation to the table might be extended again to some of them. ■

SAY

"Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof: say but the word, and my soul shall be healed."

LEARN

Sunday Mass is a reminder of the meals that Jesus ate with his disciples.

At Mass by the Spirit's power, the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ.

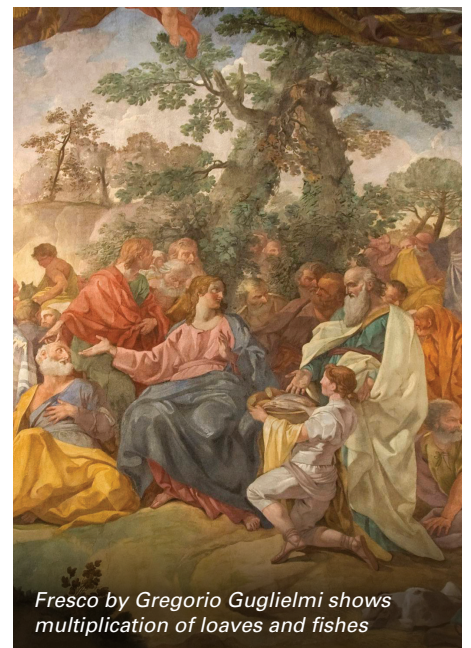
Catholics should long and pray for the day when they can celebrate the Eucharist with members of other Christian churches.

PRAY

Pray that all Christian churches will draw closer in faith and in the service of all people.

DO

Consider whether your daily attitudes to others reflect the open welcome of the Lord's table.



Fresco by Gregorio Guglielmi shows multiplication of loaves and fishes