

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Gospel Reading *LUKE 9: 11b -17*

They all ate and were satisfied.

Reflection on the Gospel Reading

Today, the second Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrate a second solemnity, which marks our return to Ordinary Time. Today is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. At one time, this day was called *Corpus Christi*, Latin for “the Body of Christ.” In the most recent revision of the liturgy, the name for this day is expanded to be a more complete reflection of our Eucharistic theology.

The feeding of the 5,000 is the only one of Jesus' miracles to appear in all four Gospels. Luke places it between Herod's question, “Who is this about whom I hear such things?” and Peter's response to Jesus' question about who he thought Jesus was: “You are the Messiah of God.” In Luke the feeding is not the result of Jesus' compassion for the crowd but is instigated by the disciples. They wanted Jesus to send the crowd away to town. Instead Jesus tells the disciples to give them some food on their own.

The passage is meant to remind us of two feedings in the Old Testament: the feeding of the Israelites in the desert and Elisha's feeding of 100 people with 20

loaves in 2 Kings 4:42-44. It is also connected to the institution of the Eucharist. As in the Last Supper accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and in Paul's account in 1 Corinthians 11:23-24, Jesus takes bread, looks up to heaven, blesses the bread, breaks it, and then gives it to the disciples. In using this exact language, Luke is reminding his readers that in this miracle Jesus is doing more than feeding hungry people as God did for the Israelites and the prophet Elisha did as well. The bread he gives is his body, which he will continue to give as often as the community breaks bread in remembrance of him in the Eucharist.

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