

Stou()space

SERIES: POINTERS ON THE JOURNEY

Season colour: **GREEN**

In this series, **Gerard Moloney, C.Ss.R** reflects on the Gospel in the context of today.

Today and for the next four Sundays we read from the famous Bread of Life chapter in the Gospel of John (Jn 6:1-69). Today's text is John's account of the feeding of at least 5,000 people.

Jesus is on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The people have gathered because they have seen him work a healing miracle or "sign," as John likes to call such miracles. Jesus retreats with his disciples to a mountain.

When Jesus sees the crowd, he senses that they are hungry and asks Philip where they could buy food. He is testing Philip. Jesus knows what he is going to do, but he wants to see if Philip knows. Philip does not know, nor does the other disciple, Andrew. They fail to understand that Jesus is the one who will satisfy the people's hunger.

Philip and Andrew try to come up with practical but conventional solutions. There are 5,000 men present, not counting women and children. According to Philip, there isn't enough money to feed such a crowd. All Andrew can come up with are the five loaves and two small fish that are offered by a little boy. Conventional solutions will not feed the people; only Jesus can feed them. Jesus then works the miracle.

Notice something very important in John's account. It is *Jesus himself* who shares the food with the people, not the disciples. He is the source of the gift for these hungry people. The miracle produces so much food that 12 baskets of leftovers are gathered.

As always the people are ecstatic about the miracle. They identify Jesus as a prophet and want to make him king. But Jesus is cautious about such enthusiasm based on his miracles or signs. He is truly a king, though not in the way the people think. His response is to withdraw by himself to the mountain. He will not be their earthly kind of king.

CALLED TO SHARE

Our culture today places huge emphasis on the individual. There's a 'rugged individualism' type of mentality around. We're

inclined to focus solely or mainly on our own needs, our individual rights, our individual entitlements. Think of how some people refused to respect the advice of health officials during the Covid 19 lockdown, how they put their own selfish needs above the welfare of the community.

The same can apply to our religion. We can reduce our religious practice to a private affair, as if it has nothing to do with our obligations to our sisters and brothers.

This blindness in our culture is the opposite of Jesus's vision of things. Jesus was totally other-centred. Food, friendship and togetherness were at the heart of his ministry. He had compassion for the hungry. The meal practice of Jesus and our celebration of the Eucharist tell us that we are a community first, that we belong together.

The feeding of the five thousand may have been due to some miraculous multiplying of food. But the real miracle may have been far simpler. It may have been that, even though the amount of food appeared small, there was sufficient for everybody when everybody shared. By his willingness to share what he had, the little boy in the story encouraged those around him to share what they had. His display of generosity inspired them to be generous also. And when everybody shared what they had, there was more than enough to go around.

Our world produces enough food to feed everybody adequately. Our planet generates enough wealth to ensure that everyone has a decent standard of living. If only we were better at sharing.

The Eucharist is a foretaste of the heavenly feast in which we hope to share. It's a reminder that everything we have is given to us as a gift. As the little boy demonstrated, if we are willing to share, if we imitate Jesus, then we will not only survive but thrive. ■



SHARING IS
CARING

DONATE

By his willingness to share what he had, the little boy in the Gospel story encouraged others in the crowd to share what they had. His display of generosity inspired those around him to be generous also.



Today's readings

Kgs 4:42-44

Eph 4:1-6

Jn 6:1-15

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Jesus' miraculous gift of food was a "sign" of his true identity, but the people immediately try to force that identity to serve their own purposes. They want to make him king in order to satisfy their own needs. This Gospel challenges us to see Jesus, not in terms of human glory, but as a sign of God's glory. Jesus has come into the world not to lord it over us in power and authority, but to serve us and to save us for God.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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17th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 25th July 2021

The Prophets

Isaiah – This is the largest book of the Prophets, 65 chapters. The oral tradition existed long before the scriptures were written down. In reality there are three separate books: the Prophet Isaiah beginning his ministry in 742 BC; a disciple during the exile who follows Isaiah's style, and a later disciple returned to Jerusalem after the exile. The Prophet Isaiah would be the first 40 chapters. He begins with the familiar theme of condemning greed, hypocrisy and lack of trust in God. The writings contain magnificent poetry and prose. The Day of the Lord is promised, when God will be seen as the true King, one who cares for His people, one who does not exploit and take from them. God will be with us 'Immanuel', used in the Advent readings. The heavenly banquet, a reading often used at funerals. Chapters 41-55 come from the time in exile in Babylon, yet hope is there, Babylon will fall to the Persians and the people might be free once more. The image of the suffering servant, a reading used on Good Friday. Could the Messiah not be a triumphant King, but one who becomes broken for their sake. He takes on the pain of his people. Chapters 56-65 – Jerusalem will be once more glorified. It is God who has been faithful, it is his love that restores the beauty. God is willing to be found, but do the people want to find him. It is from this section that Jesus reads to people in Nazareth. The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the Good News to the Poor.

Recently deceased

Frances Lavery, Hillsborough, formerly Dromara

Anniversary Masses

Dechomet

Sat 24th Marcella Doyle

Leitrim

Sat 24th John Love (MM)

Gargory

Sun 25th Mick McGreevy

Dromara

Sun 25th Hugh Pat McEvoy

Congratulations to Darren O'Higgins and Amy Morgan, and to Claire McEvoy and John Murnion who were married recently

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish
Daithí Lynch

Leitrim Cleaners - Fri 30th Jul Geraldine's Team

Gargory Altar Society – Aug Carmel & Geraldine

Cairn Sunday Walk 1st Aug

Peter Morgan's Cottage, Cairn Sunday morning, circular walk to Slieve Croob, 11k approx. Boots recommended. Road/track/rough ground/boggy in places. No dogs. Meet at the cottage at 9:00am for 9:30am start. Refreshments at the cottage on return. Everyone welcome.

There will be no Weekday Masses this week

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet

7:30pm Leitrim

Sun 9:00am Gargory

11:00am Dromara

I will be on holiday from Sun 18th Jul (after mass) until Sat 7th Aug. If there are any emergency sick calls or deaths, please try Fr Brian Brown (074 9673 1619). (I turn my mobile phone off on holiday).

Proposed changes to guidance about church attendance

due to come into place Mon 26th Jul. The 2m social distance will be reduced to 1m in a church setting. Face coverings will no longer be compulsory in church after that date. The change in social distance space will not be introduced into the parishes until the weekend I return, 7th/8th Aug. Many people have expressed a concern about the non-wearing of face coverings. Please feel free to continue wearing face coverings whilst in the church, it does help to protect others and therefore yourself. I strongly encourage people to wear them; especially as we begin the adjustment which will allow more people to attend mass. The help of Eucharistic Ministers will be very welcome. If the Eucharistic Ministers let their coordinator know if they are comfortable to take up this role again. It will take time for things to settle down, please be patient with yourself and with others during change.