



Introduction

In today's gospel Jesus feeds the hungry multitude and reveals the abundance of God. We remember all who are hungry or poor in our world today. We are sent forth to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity one God, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts.

We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.

We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.

We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us.

We sin in thought, word, and deed.

**By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us;
and in your Spirit, lead us;**

so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy

we have peace with God through ✚ Christ Jesus,
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope.

For hope does not disappoint,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

Baptized and Set Free

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

Glorious God, your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Psalmody: Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

⁸The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹**LORD, you are good to all,
and your compassion is over all your works.**

¹⁴The Lord upholds all those who fall
and lifts up those who are bowed down.

¹⁵**The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD,
and you give them their food in due season.**

¹⁶You open wide your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

¹⁷**You are righteous in all your ways
and loving in all your works.**

¹⁸You are near to all who call upon you,
to all who call upon you faithfully.

¹⁹**You fulfill the desire of those who fear you;
you hear their cry and save them.**

²⁰You watch over all those who love you,
but all the wicked you shall destroy.

²¹**My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD;
let all flesh bless God's holy name forever and ever.**

Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5

This begins a new section in Paul's letter in which he will deal with the place of Israel in God's saving plan. He opens by highlighting how Israel's heritage and legacy include being God's children, having God's covenants, being given God's law, participating in worship of God, and receiving divine promises.

Read the text [here](#).

Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

After John the Baptist is murdered, Jesus desires a time of solitude. Still, his compassion for others will not allow him to dismiss those who need him, and he is moved to perform one of his greatest miracles.

Read the text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

We all know that painful feeling when a good friend moves away, or when a long-time church member moves away, or even falls away from the church. That loss is painful, and we sometimes get caught up in the pain and grief of that loss. We are sure that nothing will ever be the same again. And for a while, things are not the same; in fact, they might even be pretty miserable. But eventually, the pain and grief soften, and we find joy in new things, and we make new friends, and we find new ways of doing things that bring us joy.

Paul has just reminded us in the previous chapter that “... neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:38-39). With this in mind, Paul then begins his lament over his Jewish siblings who have not yet believed that Jesus is the Messiah. The next three chapters, and for us – the next three Sundays – will be spent in examining the salvation of God’s chosen people and the promises that God has made to them, and to us.

As Paul reminds us, to the Israelites God has given the promise that they will be God’s people and that God will be their God. They are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and they worship the God who brought them out of Egypt, rescued them from slavery, and brought them to the promised land. God has promised to be with them always - slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. This is their God, their covenant, and their legacy. Paul is sure of this and reminds them and us of these facts.

But Paul’s concern for those who have rejected Jesus as the Messiah is not lessened by these things. He would give up anything – including his own salvation in Christ Jesus if his fellow Israelites would see the light and follow Christ, just as Paul has done. Paul’s anguish is so deep, that he would go to extremes to make it go away.

We often feel this way when someone we are close to goes away – through a change of jobs, or change of faith, or even through death. We might be willing to do desperate things to bring them back, or to somehow lessen our anguish. The reality is that there is often nothing we can do. We must find a way to accept that this is the new reality and we learn to move on. It is never easy, and it may take time – sometimes more than others, but we can and must accept that nothing we can do will change anything.

Paul, as he works his way through his grief, realizes that he cannot change others. He cannot help but anguish over Israel, but he cannot change anything. He does realize that because Israel is chosen by God, and because Abraham was given the covenant by God, and that because God is not yet done with Israel, there is still hope.

Paul also realizes that because of the original covenant given to Israel, we as Christians can believe that the promise of Jesus to grant us eternal life is true. If God will keep his promise to Israel, then God will keep his promise to us. The people of Israel are people of the promise, and by adoption, so are we.

As we live into our adoption as children of God, we realize that our salvation depends not on ourselves, but on the promise of God given to us. This is true for Israel, and it is true for us. Just as time marches on, no matter how much we sometimes wish it to stop or even go backwards, we realize that whatever was our normal is gone and that we must learn to live in a new normal.

This is especially true for us today – normal as we knew it is gone and may never come back. We are seeing the world in a totally new way and the changes we are seeing today may become part of tomorrow as well. We might grieve for the old, but we cannot go back. Pandemics require changes in how we live and interact with one another. We have to learn persistence in cleaning and restraint in physical interactions. Recognizing that the racism we thought was gone is still around and maybe stronger than ever will change how we go forward.

We must learn new ways in which to love one another. Knowing that how we learn and how we worship has changed to include technology in ways we never thought of before has also made us realize that we can reach people in ways we never thought of before. These changes will affect how we reach out to others, and how we continue to stay connected with those who cannot safely gather.

As Paul reminds us, change can be painful, but we are still children of God, heirs of God's promise, and blessed by God forever. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine (Leaning on the Everlasting Arms)

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Apostles' Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

You take resources that appear to be meager, bless them, and there is enough. May your church trust that what you bless and ask us to share with the world is abundantly sufficient. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your bountiful creation offers sustenance and life for all creatures. Protect this abundance for the well-being of all. Reverse the damage we have caused your creation. Replenish ground water supplies, provide needed rains in places of drought, and protect forests from wildfires. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You offer yourself to all the nations and peoples of the earth, inviting everyone to abundant life. Bring the prophetic vision to fullness, that all nations will run to you and that nations who do not know you will find their joy in you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Hear the anguish of tender hearts who cry to you in suffering and satisfy their deepest needs. Bring wholeness and healing to those who suffer in body, heart, soul, and mind especially those we name now. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You offer freely the fullness of salvation. Give our congregations such welcoming hearts, that our words and actions may extend your free and abundant hospitality to all whom we encounter. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You gather your saints as one, united in the body of Jesus. Bring us with all your saints to the heavenly banquet. We remember with love and thanksgiving the saints we have known. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe.