

Homily for Aug. 2, 2026
Sr. Donna Day

Isaiah 55:1-3 Romans 8:35,37-39 Matthew 14:13-21

I don't usually dedicate a homily but I am today – to the families who came to us at Pillar Place seeking shelter and food.

**Let us gather around the food,
Let us go bearing the bread, carrying the cup,
Laying the table for a hungry world.**

Nearly 50 years ago, Archbishop Romero wrote, “A church that doesn't provoke any crisis, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a teaching of Jesus that doesn't touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed—what gospel is that?”

Today's scripture reading is the kind of Gospel that can unsettle us, and call us to deep reflection on this challenge from I Am the Way: *“We commit ourselves to improving the conditions of those who suffer from injustice, oppression, and deprivation of dignity.”*

When reading a Gospel, I usually look for the one line that sticks with me and influences my prayer. The line that focuses today's story for me is: **“Give them some food yourselves.” Give them some food yourselves.**

The Gospel of Matthew was focusing here on the essential elements of discipleship: listen and do. These were core values of Judaism – the need for right motivation and moral action as the foundations of the spiritual life. To share food with others was to accept them and in turn to be accepted by them. Sharing a meal implies a sharing in each other.

We learn from the Scriptures, that many of the people of Israel did not know where their next meal would come from. Perhaps that is where the mystery begins: God does not always remove our vulnerability, but meets us within. The people came to hear Jesus, but he knew they did not have enough food. First things first.

There are moments when “enough” does not feel like enough – when needs are overwhelming, when injustice feels too large, when we wonder

what difference a small act of kindness can really make in these times – that is exactly when Christ chooses to remain with us.

This Gospel story appears in all four Gospels, a sign I think that the memory of this event in the stories passed down about Jesus was not just about feeding people but also about a people hungering for God.

When ancient Christians yearned for more goods than needed, it was called by the community, to be an addictive power. Like its “never enough – never enough land, never enough money, never enough gold, never enough food. Amos talked a lot about it when he said, “They sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals.” And Isaiah asks, “Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy?”

People have studied this Gospel of feeding 5000 as a miracle, as a crazy story, as a spiritual lesson and as a foreshadowing of the Last Supper. It seems to me it is this: an invitation to all people, and a prophetic action that called the disciples to recognize human need. What was miraculous to many hungry and poor people was that a prophet had arisen among them, so to help them listen, his friends nourished them with food and drink. Jesus not only wanted the disciples to understand their responsibility about living the Christian life but reminded them of these words of Isaiah:

*All you who are thirsty, come. You who have no money, come.
Come without paying. Come, that you may have life!*

Jesus never excluded anyone from the table – poor, rich, hungry, lonely. Pope Francis once called the Eucharist that Jesus left us a “Miracle of Mercy”, shared not as a reward but rather as love for the broken, the sinner, the weak and the hungry. So much so that during Jesus final act with friends before the crucifixion, he said, Take and eat, this is my body.” Jesus with us and in us. For ourselves alone? Never. Always for others. And with others. We ought to ask. Who is missing from the table? call them to come.

Receiving the Eucharist is not simply an act of thanksgiving or a memorial of Jesus passion, or a way to be comforted but an ethical practice that expands to the world. It is also given to us to be drawn into a way of living – a life to be poured out for others. That is the Loretto way. When we say this

prayer during Mass: "Give us this day our daily bread." Our call is to be aware of what we are doing, imitate what we hold in our hands. We listen to Jesus' call, from the mountainside, "You there, give them something to eat." And we know it is food and more, that we must give.

It is time to come to the table

Here, there is bread and wine

There is Christ offering the gifts to us with astonishing love.

What will we do with what we receive?