

## **18th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### **Make the Sign of the Cross+**

#### **Leader of the Family - Introduction**

Jesus feeds all those who come to him. He feeds us in a special way when we come to receive him in the Eucharist. He becomes present to us in his very self. May we receive this gift of himself with great joy and gratitude.

**Penitential Act** - reflect on God's love and mercy.

### **Recite the Gloria**

#### **Today's Readings**

**First Reading** Isaiah 55:1-3

The Lord invites us to come to him and our soul will live.

**Second Reading** Romans 8:35. 37-39

Nothing can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ.

**Gospel** Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus feeds all those who come to him abundantly.

### **HOMILY FOR THE 18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

*"There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves."*

Films often turn to meals as a means of communicating both human warmth and family divisions. Some are outrageous, for example the custard pie fight to end all pie fights in *The Great Race*. Pope Francis' favourite is *Babette's Feast*, a deceptively simple tale adapted in 1987 from a story by Karen Blixen. The setting is a severe Calvinistic isolated community on the coast of Denmark, presided over by its pastor with the help of his two spinster daughters. Any pleasure is frowned upon, but the daughters dutifully provide regular if plain meals for the community's sick and housebound people.

Into their midst comes a French refugee, Babette, fleeing the violence of Paris in the 1870 uprising. She is received with great caution and suspicion but happily takes over the responsibility of feeding those who are needy. After a long time among them she receives a letter, taking her away back to France, and the old people find themselves glumly back to the ministrations of the two daughters. However, Babette returns, laden down with food and drink for an incredibly special feast to which all are invited. The people debate whether to come or not, but on hearing that the lord of the manor will be attending, they all eventually turn up. What happens then is a transformation that may be likened to the Eucharist. The meal transforms their surly differences into a discovery of joy in each other and a sense of community, and the

film ends with the diners threading their way through the streets under a starlit sky, beatific smiles upon their faces.

Jesus teaches and heals, but he also feeds those who come to him. The feeding is both metaphorical, in the sense that he feeds his listeners with the word of God, but he also feeds the crowds that come to him in a real way, providing them with more than enough food for their needs. Why does he do this? It is as though he is both looking back and looking forward. He looks back to the way God fed the people in the Old Testament, especially with the manna in the desert, when again there was more than enough for the people's needs. Jesus is taking over the role as the one who provides for us in abundance.

Looking forward, he is anticipating the time when he will no longer be with us in the flesh but will continue to feed us. The final act he performs with his disciples is to eat with them at the Last Supper and he leaves them with the instruction to repeat that action in memory of him. That action is not so much to remember the Last Supper. It is the bloodless way of remembering and making present the sacrifice that Jesus makes through his death on the cross. But that, too, is not the end of the story, for among his risen appearances to his disciples we find him revealing his presence through the breaking of the bread as he journeys with them to Emmaus and he also feeds them once again after a night of fruitless fishing. It is as though he wants to reinforce his message that he is the food of life and it is in coming to receive him that we are transformed from our sinfulness into other Christs.

Sacraments affect our lives in two ways. Firstly, they ask us to focus on an action and instruction of Jesus that helps us enter the mystery of his living presence among us. They go beyond words and lead us through their symbols into the divine life itself. However, sacraments also have the complementary effect of taking the ordinary events of our life they are based on into a different dimension. Not only do we appreciate the Eucharist as making Christ present within us, we appreciate how each time we gather to eat and drink with each other in our ordinary lives we express and open ourselves to that same presence. There is a flow from the earthly symbols, the bread and wine, the oils and water, into their sacred expression of Christ's presence, but then they flow back into their earthly realities, the bread and wine we share together on a daily basis and make them, too, moments of Christ's presence. The Church likes to speak of the whole world as a sacrament and then of Christ as the sacrament of the world. Hence the transformative effect of *Babette's Feast*.

### **Summary**

1. The film *Babette's Feast* expresses how good meals taken together can help us move from sadness to joy, from gloomy disagreements to pleasurable communion.
2. Jesus feeds us as well as heals us. In this he reminds us of God feeding the people in the Old Testament and looks forward to the time when he will feed us with his very self in the Eucharist.
3. Sacraments centre us on Christ but also help us to allow Christ to transform the daily practices of our life.

## **Recite the Creed**

### **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL FOR THE 18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

#### **Leader in the Family:**

We bring ourselves to God in prayer,  
that God may touch our hearts and transform our lives,  
as we respond, 'Lord, hear our prayer'.

#### **Member of the Family:**

1. We pray for the Church:  
may she always feed us generously with God's word and the sacraments,  
and may we grow into the fullness of God's life within us.  
We pray to the Lord...
2. We pray for our world:  
may we bring good food to those who are undernourished,  
especially in regions suffering from famine and crop failure.  
We pray to the Lord...
3. We pray for our young people:  
may they not lose their deep sense of what is right  
and just but continue to grow in their awareness  
of the many needs of our world.  
We pray to the Lord...
4. We pray for the members of our communities  
who are sick or housebound,  
especially Deacon David Bentham:  
may their sufferings be lightened by the presence  
and help of those who care for them.  
We pray to the Lord...
5. We pray for all who have died, especially Fr. Tom Garvey  
and those close to us who have died recently  
or whose anniversaries we remember at this time:  
may they be at peace with their God.  
We pray to the Lord...

#### **Leader of the Family:**

God our Father, we place all our prayers and needs in your hands,  
asking you to nourish and strengthen us to do your will,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen!!!

## **Recite the Our Father**

**Reflect of the God's love through Jesus and the Holy Spirit**

**Final Blessing – Make the Sign of the Cross+**