

## Sunday in the Fourth Week: Multiplication of the Loaves

At that time, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias; and a great multitude followed Him, because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased. Jesus therefore went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the pasch, the festival-day of the Jews, was at hand. When Jesus therefore had lifted up His eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to Him, He said to Philip: **Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?** And this He said to try him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered: Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of His disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to Him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said: **Make the men sit down.** Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to them that were sat down. In like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled He said to His disciples: **Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost.** They gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above to them that had eaten. Now those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: **This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world.** Jesus therefore, when He knew that they would come to take Him by force and make Him king, fled again into the mountain, Himself alone.

*The Gospel according to St John, VI:1-15.*

### *Summary of the Morrow's Meditation*

We will meditate tomorrow: first, on the goodness of Jesus Christ in the multiplication of the material bread which nourishes the body; second, on His still greater goodness in the multiplication of the Eucharistic bread which nourishes the soul. We will then make the resolution: first, to unite with all our repasts a great feeling of gratitude towards Providence who gives them to us; second, to honour the Holy Eucharist by frequent and more fervent communions and by more regular and more recollected visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of the Psalmist: "*How good is God . . . to them that art of a right heart*" (Ps. LXXII:1).

### *Meditation for the Morning*

Let us adore the tenderness of Jesus Christ towards the people who followed Him into the desert; His loving heart is moved by their needs, and He provides for them in a wholly miraculous manner. Let us adore His goodness, which shows itself in a far greater manner still in the institution of the Eucharistic bread which nourishes our souls. Oh, how greatly such goodness deserves our praise and our love!

## THE GOODNESS OF OUR LORD IN THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE BREAD WHICH NOURISHES THE BODY

It was doubtless a great miracle to multiply five loaves of bread and two fishes to such an extent as to satisfy the hunger of five thousand men, and to fill twelve baskets with what remained. All those who were witnesses of this miracle had good reason to proclaim the author of it as King, and to attach themselves to Him so as never to be separated from Him any more. But every day Jesus renews, and will continue until the end of the world, a much more astonishing miracle, namely, the annual multiplication of grains and fruits, sufficient to feed the whole human race, and to give it not only what is necessary, but also what is agreeable; and the divine action which every year makes all the seeds germinate, grow, and ripen, in such a manner as to provide for all man's wants, in every part of the globe. This striking miracle is hardly ever remarked by ungrateful men. Very few appreciate it, very few thank God for it from the bottom of their hearts. Many even go to the extent of making use of His benefits only in order to offend Him. And yet, O wonder of wonders! so much ingratitude does not wear out His love. He sheds His dew and His heat upon the field of the sinner as well as on that of the just. Oh, how good God is! what care He takes of His own! how just it is to love Him, to bless Him, and to offer thanks continually to Him!

## THE GOODNESS OF OUR LORD IN THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE EUCHARISTIC BREAD WHICH FEEDS SOULS

There is, in this single fact, a world of miracles. By it Jesus Christ multiplies His presence in as many places as there are altars where the priest sacrifices, in as many hosts as all the ciboriums in the world can hold, in as many particles as each host contains. By it Jesus Christ is always present in these places, remaining, after the sacrifice, in all the tabernacles, although forsaken, solitary, disowned, despised, assaulted by irreverences done to Him, profanations, outrages; and in the midst of it all He prays, He immolates Himself for men, who respond so ill to His love. By it He allows Himself to be distributed as food to all those who present themselves, even to the unworthy, to be borne to all the sick who desire to receive Him, even to the humblest cottage. By it He receives all who desire to speak to Him. He calls to the afflicted in order to console them, the feeble to sustain them, and there is not a moment during the day or night in which He is not happy to grant them an audience. By it He places all His graces at the disposition of those who will receive them, and whoever has recourse to Him may say with Job: "*Deliver me, O Lord, and set me beside Thee, and let any man's hand fight against me*" (Job XVII:3). Can love go farther than this? And in presence of these miracles, what ought the heart to utter except praises and expressions of love to the God who has so loved men? And what part ought we to take if it be not that of receiving Him often and piously? His desire is to give Himself to us. Shall not our supreme desire be to give ourselves to Him?

*Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.*