



Session Five

The Eucharist and Community

THE EUCHARIST AND COMMUNITY

Opening Prayer

Eternal God,
in Christ you have sought us
with a shepherd's heart,
and we have rejoiced
to be found and restored.
Multiply in all the world
the wonders of your saving grace,
and gather your scattered people
until heaven resounds in jubilation
at humanity made whole
and creation restored.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. **Amen**

Scripture *John 6:5-14*

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.'

Words of Pope Francis

How can they feed all these people? Philip, one of the Twelve, quickly calculates: by taking up a collection, they might collect 200 denarii at most, which would not be enough to feed 5,000 people.

The disciples reason in “marketing” terms, but Jesus substitutes the logic of buying with another logic, the logic of giving. It is here that Andrew, one of the Apostles, the brother of Simon Peter, presents a young lad who offers everything he has: five loaves and two fish; but of course, Andrew says, they are nothing for that multitude (*cf. v. 9*). Jesus actually expecting this. He orders the disciples to make the people sit down, then he takes those loaves and those fish, gives thanks to the Father and distributes them (*cf. v. 11*). These acts prefigure the Last Supper, which gives the bread of Jesus its truest significance. The bread of God is Jesus Himself. By receiving Him in Communion, we receive his life within us and we become children of the Heavenly Father and brothers among ourselves. By receiving communion we meet Jesus truly living and risen! Taking part in the Eucharist means entering into the logic of Jesus, the logic of giving freely, of sharing. And as poor as we are, we all have something to give. “To receive Communion” means to draw from Christ the grace which enables us to share with others all we are and all we have.

Angelus Address, Saint Peter’s Square, 26 July 2015

Reflection

Sarah Adams

The reflection from Sarah is available to download from cliftondiocese.com.
Play the video clip [here](#).

Bread for the world, a world of hunger,
Wine for all peoples, people who thirst.
May we who eat, be bread for others.
May we who drink, pour out our love.

Bernadette Farrell OCP 1990

One bread, one body, one cup, one call,
one faith, one Spirit, present in us all,
One prayer, one blessing, one hope, one peace,
one Church one people, one love released.

Bob Frenzel and Kevin Keil. OCP 1990

Questions for conversation

What are the roots of your parish community like? In what ways are they so entwined that people feel confident that this is a community where people do feel united as one? What else could be done to strengthen the roots of this unity? For example: does everyone feel that they belong? Does every group within the community feel they have a role to play? How do you know?

How is Mass celebrated in your parish? Is there a sense that though we come together as disparate individuals, we leave as a united community ready to proclaim the Gospel? How do different ministers enable this sense of coming together e.g. Do those who minister through the music, ensure that everyone has a sense of being a part of something bigger than themselves?

How is your community 'bread for the world'? What is the external manifestation of the commitment of your parish to reaching out to the wider world? How does your parish support refugees, asylum seekers, the homeless, the drug addict, those we may feel anxious to support?

Re-read the Scripture passage for this session. You may like to follow the reading with a time of prayer and intercession after which you might pray the **OUR FATHER**.

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
in this most wonderful sacrament
you have left us the memorial of your passion;
deepen our reverence for the mystery of your body and blood,
that we may experience within us the fruit of your redemption.
You live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. **Amen**