

## **Friday (Pope Paul VI)**

We cannot form an adequate concept of humans unless we include God. He is mysterious, transcendent and ineffable, the eternal principle of the universe. But he watches over us, knows us and observes us, penetrates and preserves us unceasingly. He is our Father.

### **Scripture (Psalm 145:13-19)**

***Your kingship is a kingship for ever, your reign lasts from age to age. The Lord is trustworthy in all his words, and upright in all his deeds. The Lord supports all who stumble, lifts up those who are bowed down. All look to you in hope and you feed them with the food of the season. And, with generous hand, you satisfy the desires of every living creature. Upright in all that he does, the Lord acts only in faithful love. He is close to all who call upon him, all who call on him from the heart. He fulfils the desires of all who fear him, he hears their cry and he saves them.***

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*18th Week of Ordinary Time*

### **Give Him and inch and He'll make it a mile**

*I wonder if one problem at the heart of relationship with God is that I tend to focus more on my own weaknesses and shortcomings than on God's lavish, even ridiculous, generosity? Whether it's pride or that my vision is too short-sighted, my horizon too near, the invitation in Isaiah 55:1-3 is one that is a little unsettling if I stop and think about it. The generosity of God is evident, and I'm always comfortable with anyone who wants to spoil me with food and drink. Perhaps it's the longing in God's invitation that begins to unsettle me; or is it that he insists on giving everything and I don't have to do anything or pay anything. This creates a feeling of 'I don't deserve this'.*

*But this is the whole point of the passage. The invitation is to exiles who have nothing – physically or otherwise. The only thing the people have is thirst and hunger. Since the imagery of the banquet is often used to symbolise the new Covenant, it is hunger and thirst for God that he longs to satisfy. The invitation is to live a new life, one that is more satisfying than money can buy. Of course, this implies that anyone who is perfectly satisfied with 'the world' and the happiness money can buy, (and it certainly can buy some), won't be hungry for this banquet.*

*The crowd who follow Jesus are clearly hungering for Jesus, (Matthew 14:13-21), and the generosity and compassion of Jesus are clear to see: he has received news that John the Baptist has been killed and he wants time away from the crowds to be with his close friends, but they follow on foot and by the time the boat arrives, a large crowd is waiting. He could, of course, have spotted this and sailed on to find a quieter cove, but he takes pity on them and spends the day curing the sick before the Feeding of the 5000.*

*The Jewish readers would understand this in the context of the Messianic Banquet spoken of in the Old Testament as a sign that God's reign has arrived. As Christians, we can also read in Matthew's account many clues as to how the Kingdom will arrive. The amount of food is ridiculously small (compared to the crowd's needs, it is a mustard seed), and yet it becomes something able to more than satisfy the people's hunger. Significantly, the 12 friends of Jesus are intermediaries, carrying out his instructions and distributing the food. The 12 baskets left over are no coincidence: the Old Covenant was with 12 Tribes of Israel so the emphasis on 12 points to the new Covenant.*

*As Christians, we believe this new Covenant was established by Jesus in his death and Resurrection, and since the words and actions of Jesus in Feeding miracle are identical to what he will say and do with the bread at the Last Supper, (taking, blessing, breaking, giving). Matthew is pointing to Jesus in his role as Messiah.*

*Perhaps one aspect of the miracle I often overlook is Jesus' instruction to 'give them something to eat yourself.' Who, me? I have so little to offer, and the task is so big (I then insert excuses about the secular society / greed and individualism etc, etc., and don't mention my own feeling of feeling inadequate, ill-prepared etc.). It's now that I'm brought face to face with my lack of faith: yes, all of that is true, but that's the point of the apostles bringing the little they had to Jesus, (think Offertory?) and allowing him to work with what they have.*

*When I come to prayer, and especially to Communion, I need to remember this miracle as well as the Last Supper; when I return from communion, I need to remember 'Give them something to eat yourself' during the week. . Martin Bennett*

### **Monday (A New Catechism)**

The coming of the Kingdom of God is God's grace decreed and given. But grace demands that we should give ourselves up to it. Those who thus become as little children, who allow themselves to be given grace and who surrender themselves in turn, receive the joy that comes from God. The joy is the joy of those who know much has been given them. The Kingdom of God is sublime and divine, yet it never loses touch with the everyday world, with the here and now, with us The Kingdom which was first manifested in simplicity and love in the countryside of Galilee is to reach its fulfilment in a great love among all that exists.

### **Scripture (Matthew 14:14-20)**

*As Jesus stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them and healed their sick. When evening came, the disciples said, 'This is a lonely place, send the people away so they can buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, 'There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves.' All they had was five loaves and two fish, which they brought to Jesus. He took the five loaves and two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And breaking the loaves, he handed them to the disciples, who gave them to the crowds. They all ate as much as they wanted, and there were twelve baskets of scraps left over.*

### **Tuesday (C.S.Lewis)**

The central miracle asserted by Christians is the Incarnation. God became man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this. Every particular Christian miracle manifests at a particular place and moment the character and significance of the Incarnation. There is no question in Christianity of arbitrary interferences just scattered about. It relates not a series of disconnected raids on nature but the various steps of a strategically coherent invasion – an invasion which intends complete conquest and 'occupation'.

### **Scripture (John 1:1-5,14)**

*In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him. What has come into being through him was life, life that was the light of men; and light shines in darkness, and darkness could not overpower it. The Word became flesh, he lived among us and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

### **Wednesday (Carlo Carretto)**

Jesus is the 'Holy One of God'. But the Holy One of God realised his sanctity, not in an extraordinary life, but one impregnated with ordinary things: work, family and social life, obscure human activities, simple things shared by all people. The perfection of God is cast in a material which people almost despise, which they don't consider worth searching for because of its simplicity, its lack of interest, because it is common to all people.

### **Scripture (Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-16)**

*The Lord says this: Look, I myself shall take care of my flock and look after it. As a shepherd looks after his flock when he is with his scattered sheep, so shall I look after my sheep. I myself shall pasture my sheep, I myself shall give them rest—declares the Lord. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the injured and make the sick strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.*

### **Thursday (Julian of Norwich)**

The love of God for us is so wonderful that it surpasses all knowledge. No created being can know the greatness, the sweetness, the tenderness of the love that our master has for us. By his grace and help, therefore, let us in spirit stand and gaze, eternally marvelling at the supreme, single-minded, surpassing, incalculable love that God, who is goodness, has for us. When we possess him in fullness and joy, we shall have no further wants. Meanwhile his will is that we go on knowing and loving until we are perfected in heaven.

### **Scripture (Isaiah 55:1-3)**

*Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty: though you have no money, come! Buy and eat: come, buy wine and milk without money, free! Why spend money on what cannot nourish and your wages on what fails to satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy. Pay attention, come to me; listen, and you will live. I shall make an everlasting covenant with you in fulfilment of the favours I promised to David.*