



They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up
the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full.
MATTHEW 14:20

A Free Meal, but with Demands

When God invites you to a meal, you never have to pay. It might be free, but it does have its demands. In fact, you are expected to open yourself to a total transformation. In the first reading, Isaiah mentions the renewal of an everlasting covenant. Perhaps a small dinner fee might be easier to handle.

This reading is quite tender. The needy are invited to a meal of grain, wine, and milk. Their neediness might explain why the meal is free. The invitation is magnanimous: “Come to me...that you may have life” (Isaiah 55:3). The Gospel story of the multiplication of the fishes and loaves reveals the same magnanimity. Jesus feeds all those who have followed him, no questions asked. This story follows a long tradition of miraculous feedings, which include the manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16) and Elisha multiplying bread (2 Kings 4:42–44). It’s natural to wonder just how that bread and those fish were able to satisfy so many, but there is another aspect of the story that should not be overlooked. The words, “He said the blessing, broke

the loaves, and gave them to the disciples” (Matthew 14:19) will appear again in the account of the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26). Though this was the ritual performed at the daily Jewish meal, the eucharistic allusion is unmistakable.

Perhaps it is the psalm response that throws light on the primary focus of the readings. There the graciousness and kindness of the Lord are acclaimed: “You open wide your hand / and satisfy the desire of every living thing” (Psalm 145:16).

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- Think of the good things in your life that have been given to you free of charge. How grateful are you?
- Think of the times God has used you to bless others. How grateful are you for this?

Dear Padre,

Recently a visiting priest went completely off script during the eucharistic prayer at Mass. Is this allowed?

The eucharistic prayer is the summit of the entire Mass, culminating in what it means for the Church to celebrate the Eucharist. *The Roman Missal* offers ten options in English: Eucharistic Prayers 1, 2, 3, and 4; two for reconciliation; and four for various needs. Also, an additional three are available for Masses with children. Not all of these options appear regularly in missalettes.

In exercising his office of celebrant, the priest is allowed to offer brief explanations, such as before the preface to the eucharistic prayer, but never during the prayer itself (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 31).

In general, “the Priest will remember that he is the servant of the Sacred Liturgy and that he himself is not permitted, on his own initiative, to add, to remove, or to change anything in the celebration of Mass” (*GIRM* 24). The mystery of the Mass “is too great for anyone to permit himself to treat it according to his own whim, so that its sacredness and its universal ordering would be obscured” (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 11).

Overall, presiders desire a meaningful ritual experience for those hungering and thirsting for holiness to encounter the living presence of Christ. If some actions and proclamations by presiders appear misguided, they’re seldom due to a lack of genuine pastoral care.

—Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR
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CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE/REGORA A. SHEMITZ

A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Obedient to Jesus' commands, the Church organized the eucharistic liturgy into moments which correspond to the words and the actions performed by him on the eve of his passion....In the eucharistic prayer, we give thanks to God for the whole work of redemption, and the offerings become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

—GENERAL AUDIENCE, FEBRUARY 28, 2018



Calendar

Monday

AUGUST 3

Weekday

Jer 28:1–17

Mt 14:22–36

Tuesday

AUGUST 4

St. John Vianney,
Priest

Jer 30:1–2, 12–15,
18–22

Mt 14:22–36 or

Mt 15:1–2, 10–14

Wednesday

AUGUST 5

Weekday

Jer 31:1–7

Mt 15:21–28

Thursday

AUGUST 6

Transfiguration
of the Lord

Dn 7:9–10, 13–14

2 Pt 1:16–19

Mt 17:1–9

Friday

AUGUST 7

Weekday

Na 2:1, 3; 3:1–3, 6–7

Mt 16:24–28

Saturday

AUGUST 8

St. Dominic,
Priest

Hb 1:12–2:4

Mt 17:14–20

Sunday

AUGUST 9

Nineteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

1 Kgs 19:9a, 11–13a

Rom 9:1–5

Mt 14:22–33