

- Looking at our second reading from St. Paul today, we see how Paul—in advancing the teaching of Christ Himself—advances the unity in faith: “...[strive] to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit...the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”
- This unity Paul stresses throughout his letters, as when he writes: “...we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” (Romans 12:5)
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- The joy of unity in God is expressed early in the Bible.
- The Israelites were encouraged to look after one another, regardless of which tribe they belonged...and much of God’s Law given to them addressed that unity of faith and brotherhood.
- The second great commandment of Jesus came not when He said it, but early in the Old Testament: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart...you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19:17-18)
- And then in Psalm 133 we hear God say: “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!...For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life for evermore.” (Psalm 133:1-3)
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- Well, it is in Christ that mankind finds unity of spirit and life—Jesus, who is God Himself, stresses love of God and neighbor repeatedly throughout His earthly ministry...and later through His apostles, as we heard from Paul.....and as we hear in Peter’s letter: “...have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind.” (1 Peter 3:8)
- Then, of course, Jesus’ own words: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

- The Eucharist—the sacrament of sacraments from which all other sacraments derive their grace, because the Eucharist IS Christ—is demonstration, sign and continuous reminder of that unity...and an urging by God towards an ever greater unifying charity in His people...and in all humanity.

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- The Eucharist, of course, is foreshadowed in the feeding of the 5000 that we read in our Gospel today.
 - And, again—be wary of the “pot luck” explanation of this account that holds Jesus as not really multiplying the loaves and the fish, but that the people really had food all along and were simply moved to share because of Jesus’ preaching—and the sharing was the so-called “miracle”. Well...that’s no miracle at all.
 - If everyone had enough to share and eat in the first place, the apostles wouldn’t have been concerned, and Jesus wouldn’t have needed to feed them.
 - And the Gospel says that the apostles: “...*filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than [all the people] could eat.*”
 - That “pot luck” idea originated simply as a rationalistic way to de-divinize Jesus...to make Him just a good man with nice teaching... which conveniently removes any obligation to follow Him.
 - But the people wouldn’t have wanted to proclaim Jesus as the long-awaited prophet and king simply because of organizing a pot luck picnic.

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- Now, Jesus purposely chooses the setting in which to perform this sign of His divinity...for He is the new and eternal lawgiver, of whom Moses was a simple foreshadowing.

- As Moses went up the mountain of Sinai, Jesus ascends a mountain...but not alone toward God as Moses did, but rather drawing the people upward to and with Himself...ushering in God's even greater intimacy with mankind.
- It was near Passover—the celebration of Israel's deliverance from slavery...as Jesus knew that He would soon be delivering mankind from slavery to sin on the cross, and to new life in His resurrection.
- The green grass upon which the people reclined alludes to a new springtime coming in Christ...the new Passover.
- And this episode in one aspect reminds of when God promised to feed the Israelites in the desert. Moses—like the apostles in our Gospel—was perplexed, and said to God: *“‘Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?’ And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.’”*
(Numbers 11:18-23) And the manna and flocks of quail came to feed them all.

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- The apostles providing the “seed” of the meal in the few loaves and fish, to be multiplied by Jesus to feed many thousands, is much like our offering of gifts brought to the altar in Mass...material bread and wine to be transformed into the true sustenance of His Body and Blood for our grace and salvation.
 - And as the many grains of wheat form the bread, and the many grapes provide the wine, so we, though many, become one in the sacrament of the Eucharist...the sacrament of Christ's own Body.

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- So we, as disciples of Christ, are called to advance that unity among all peoples; this is why our creed of faith states “one, holy,

catholic and apostolic faith”—one faith...and also “catholic”—from the Greek word for “universal”.

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- So, as Paul urges us today, let us: “...*live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace...*” ...in that way seeking to draw others to oneness in Christ.
- For it is only through love of God and one another that peace and unity can exist.
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- Hatred, by definition, means division...while love, by definition, seeks oneness...as we seek oneness in the Body of Christ... oneness with God Himself...
- ...seeking to bring to fruition Jesus’ last prayer to the Father for us just before His passion: “...*Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.*” (John 17:11)

Reading I [2 Kgs 4:42-44](#)

A man came from Baal-shalishah bringing to Elisha, the man of God,
twenty barley loaves made from the firstfruits,
and fresh grain in the ear.

Elisha said, "Give it to the people to eat."

But his servant objected,

"How can I set this before a hundred people?"

Elisha insisted, "Give it to the people to eat."

"For thus says the LORD,

'They shall eat and there shall be some left over.'"

And when they had eaten, there was some left over,
as the LORD had said.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18](#)

R. (cf. 16) The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.

Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

R. The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

The eyes of all look hopefully to you,
and you give them their food in due season;
you open your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

R. The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

The LORD is just in all his ways
and holy in all his works.

The LORD is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.

R. The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

Reading II [Eph 4:1-6](#)

Brothers and sisters:

I, a prisoner for the Lord,

urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received,

with all humility and gentleness, with patience,

bearing with one another through love,

striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:

one body and one Spirit,

as you were also called to the one hope of your call;

one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

one God and Father of all,

who is over all and through all and in all.

Gospel [Jn 6:1-15](#)

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee.
A large crowd followed him,
because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick.
Jesus went up on the mountain,
and there he sat down with his disciples.
The Jewish feast of Passover was near.
When Jesus raised his eyes
and saw that a large crowd was coming to him,
he said to Philip,
“Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?”
He said this to test him,
because he himself knew what he was going to do.
Philip answered him,
“Two hundred days’ wages worth of food would not be enough
for each of them to have a little.”
One of his disciples,
Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him,
“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish;
but what good are these for so many?”
Jesus said, “Have the people recline.”
Now there was a great deal of grass in that place.
So the men reclined, about five thousand in number.
Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks,
and distributed them to those who were reclining,
and also as much of the fish as they wanted.
When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples,
“Gather the fragments left over,
so that nothing will be wasted.”
So they collected them,
and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments
from the five barley loaves
that had been more than they could eat.
When the people saw the sign he had done, they said,
“This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world.”
Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off
to make him king,
he withdrew again to the mountain alone.