

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise:

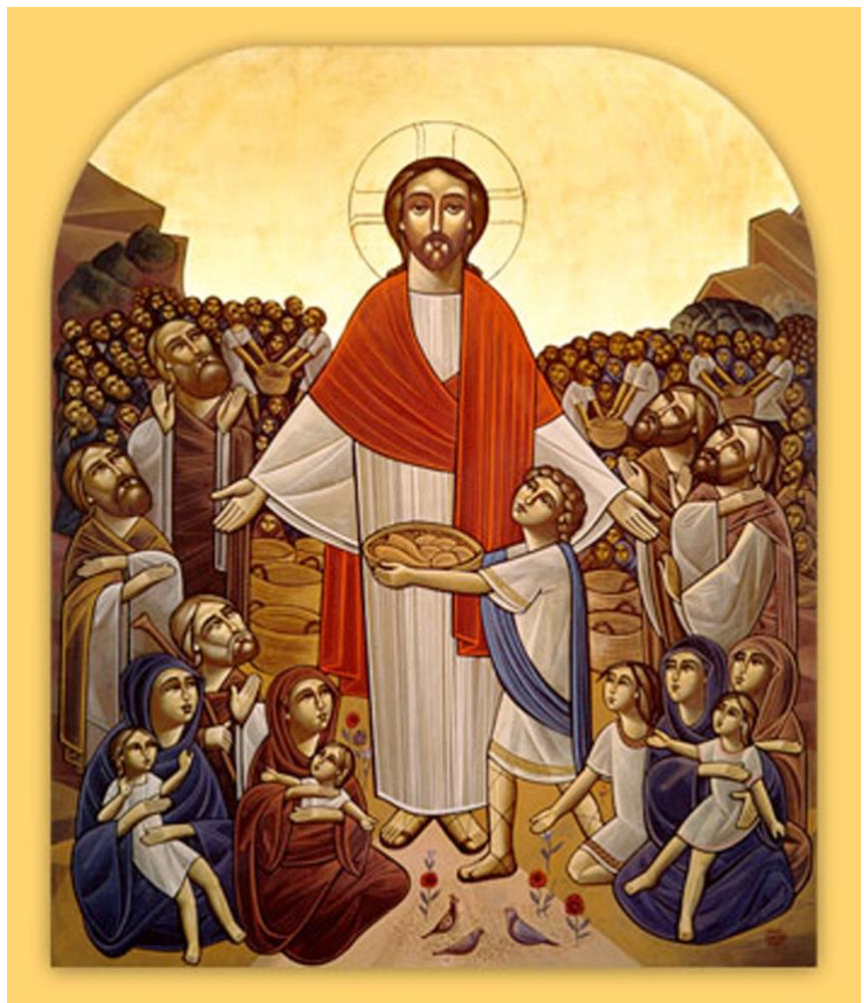
Sunday, August 2nd, 2020

Opening Acclamation:

Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern it always by your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.



Meditation

Matthew's telling of the story of the feeding of the five thousand is one that we have all undoubtedly heard many times. This story is one that is told to children to bring them hope. If God through Jesus can feed five thousand men plus innumerable women and children with just two fish and five loaves of bread, what can't God do? For many adults, it forms part of our Eucharistic tradition; not only did Jesus break bread at the Last Supper with his twelve closest followers and provide the words of institution that we recite when we celebrate Communion, but Jesus also broke bread and fed thousands with just five loaves.

In seeing this event as part of our Eucharistic tradition, we gain two insights. First, while we see the disciples as the ones who serve Jesus by sharing this miraculous feast with the crowd, we see the feast itself being shared by a multitude, no exceptions. Second, we see how this feast truly is Communion, an intimate sharing of self with others. Not only did the crowd share the feast, but they shared their leftovers as well. In Jesus they were fed, but as a crowd they found abundance.

Unfortunately, we live in this time of pandemic. We have been cut off from Communion, we cannot gather in groups of more than twenty-five, we cannot break bread together, how can the story of the feeding of the five thousand feed us today? I think the answer is in how we treat one another; we must become the Eucharist that we have been cut off from. We must wear our masks out of love for one another, we must learn to see with the eyes of one another to overcome racism, and we must find in this time of scarcity abundance to share with one another.

By Rev. Rosaleen Nogle, St. Mark's and All Saints, Buffalo

Prayer:

*On my own what I have to give doesn't amount to much
in the light of all you have given to me and in the face of so much need.
Put together as a congregation, what we offer you here in love becomes more,
not simply added together, but somehow multiplied in its usefulness.
We ask you to bless our gifts and with the addition of your blessing,
just as it was with the loaves and fishes, there is enough for all.
Amen*

*~ from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
<http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/>*

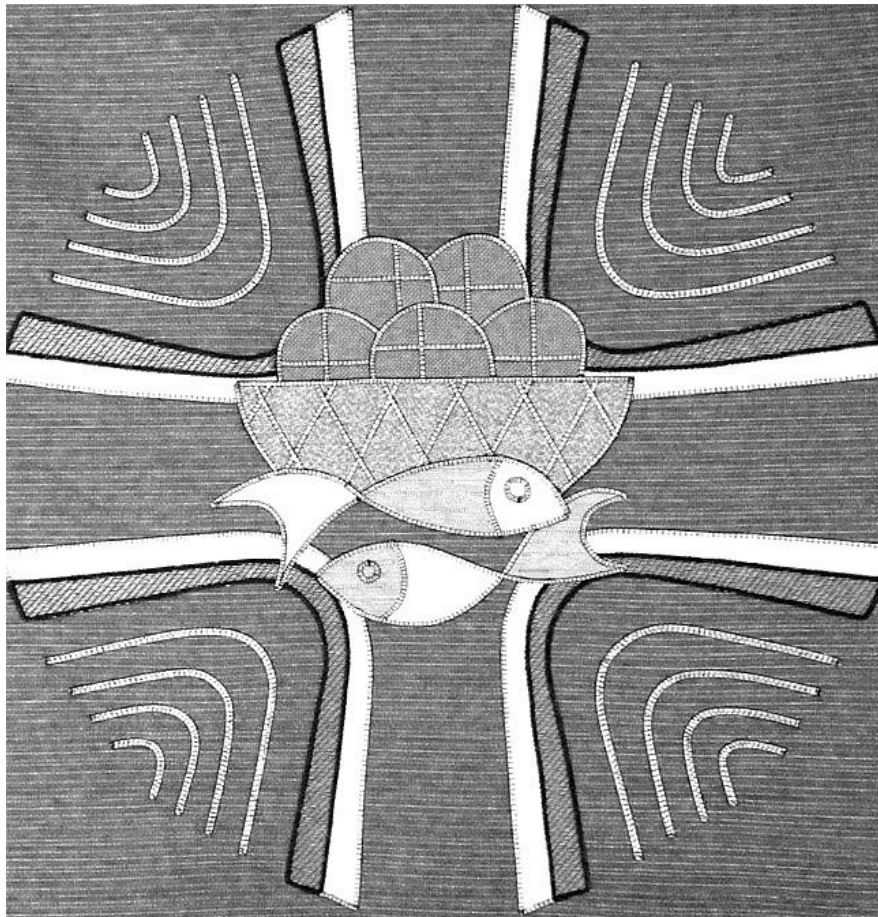
Take a moment now for silent reflection. Think of the people and things that cause you worry or concern; think of the things for which you are grateful. Raise them up in prayer using the words our Savior Christ taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Grace:

*Glorious God,
your generosity floods the world with goodness
and you shower creation with abundance.
Awaken in us a hunger for food to satisfy both body and heart,
that in the miracle of being fed
we may be empowered to feed the hungry in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Use your parish directory this week as a prayer tool. Pray for five or ten members by name each day. As the sheep know their master's voice, use your own to offer prayer for the members, staff, clergy, and volunteers of your own worship community.



Each Sunday at 10 a.m., Bishop Sean and other leaders from WNY and NWPA will lead worship via the Zoom platform. Anyone can join the service via phone by calling **646-876-9923 use code 127 336 938**. Those wishing to join by instead of video can use this link: <https://zoom.us/j/127336938> If you are asked for a password, use **lakeerie**.

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise is produced for The Episcopal Dioceses of NWPA and WNY.
By the Rev. Steve Lane and the Rev. Claudia Scheda, and guest contributors as noted.
Prayers and pictures from Vanderbilt Library July 2020