

**The Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6, Part 1)  
(17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)**

**2 Kings 4:42-44—Elisha Multiplies the Loaves**

1. First Fruits: the “first fruits, twenty *loaves of barley*” (4:42)
2. Crowd Size: 100 men (4:43)
3. Miracle of Multiplication: “Give them to the men, that they may eat...” (4:43)
4. Leftovers: “they ate, and had some left...” (4:44)

**Psalm 145—The Hand of the Lord Feeds Us**

1. Food/Harvest: “you give them their food in due season” (v. 15)
2. Prayers Answered: “satisfy the desire of every living thing” (v. 16)

**Ephesians 4:1-6—One Faith, One Lord, One Baptism**

1. Unity of the Church: “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (4:5)

**John 6:1-15—Jesus Multiplies the Loaves**

1. The Passover: Springtime (March/April) (6:4)
2. Jesus’ Question: “How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” (6:5)
3. Cost of Food: “300 denarii” = 300 Days wages (1 years ‘salary’) (6:7)
4. Crowd Size: 5,000 men
5. Thanksgiving: “when Jesus had given thanks (Greek *eucharistēsas*)” (6:11)
6. Leftovers: filled with “fragments from the five loaves” (6:13)
7. New Moses: “This is indeed the prophet...!” (6:14; cf. Deut 18)

[The LORD said to Moses:] “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” (Deuteronomy 18:18)

**A “Miracle” of “Sharing”?**

H. E. G. Paulus: “When Jesus saw the multitude... He said to his disciples, ‘We will set the rich people among them a good example, that they may share their supplies with the others,’ and He began to distribute His own provisions, and those of the disciples, to the people who were sitting near them. The example had its effect, and soon there was plenty for everyone.<sup>1</sup>

**The Catechism on the “Miracle” of Multiplication**

The *miracles* of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessing, breaks

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1968 [orig. 1906]), 52, summarizing Heinrich Eberhard Gottlieb Paulus, *Das Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums* (2 vols.; Heidelberg: C. F. Winter, 1828). For a refutation of this view, see Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 75-76.

and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, *prefigure the superabundance of this unique bread of his Eucharist.* (CCC 1335)

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection (17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. What is the significance of Elisha's miracle of multiplication?

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2. What is the significance of Jesus multiplying the loaves at Passover time? How does the crowd's response to his actions reveal the nature of the miracle?

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3. Some people say that the feeding of the 5,000 is a 'miracle' of sharing. What evidence in the Gospel shows that it is describing an actual miracle?

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### For Further Study

1. Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* (New York: Image, 2011), 75-115. A close analysis of John 6 in the light of the Old Testament and ancient Jewish traditions about the Messiah, the new Moses, and the new Manna from heaven.
2. Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015). An in-depth analysis of all the major Eucharistic passages in the Gospels. For a scholarly audience.