

A reading from the second book of Kings.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

A man came bringing food from the first fruits  
to Elisha, the man of God:  
twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack.  
Elisha said, "Give it to the people and let them eat."  
But his servant said,  
"How can I set this before a hundred people?"  
So Elisha repeated,  
"Give it to the people and let them eat,  
for thus says the Lord,  
"They shall eat and have some left."  
The servants set it before them,  
they ate, and had some left,  
according to the word of the Lord.



Pause for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## SECOND READING – 17 B

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters:

I, the prisoner in the Lord,  
beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling  
to which you have been called,  
with all humility and gentleness, with patience,  
bearing with one another in love,  
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit  
in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit,  
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,  
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
one God and Father of all,  
who is above all and through all and in all.



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – 17 B

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

*Glory to you, O Lord.*

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias.

A large crowd kept following him,

because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick.

Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples.

Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near.

When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him,

Jesus said to Philip,

“Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?”

He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.

Philip answered him,

“Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.”

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Jesus,

“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish.

But what are they among so many people?”

Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.”

Now there was a great deal of grass in the place;

so they sat down, about five thousand in all.

Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks,

he distributed them to those who were seated;

so also the fish, as much as they wanted.

When they were satisfied, he told his disciples,

“Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.”

So they gathered them up,

and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten,

they filled twelve baskets.

When the people saw the sign that he had done,

they began to say,

“This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

When Jesus realized that they were about to come

and take him by force to make him king,

he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

### **Reading I: 2 Kings 4:42-44**

This little story from the Elisha cycle is not widely known, but it has become quite important in recent New Testament scholarship because it provides the literary prototype of the miraculous feedings in the Gospels.

The pattern of the feeding narratives is largely the same: (1) food is brought to the man of God; (2) the amount of the food is specified; (3) it is objected that the quantity is inadequate; (4) behaving as master of the situation, the man of God ignores the objection and commands that the food be distributed; (5) the crowd not only have enough to eat but there is some left over.

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### **Responsorial Psalm: 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18**

Psalm 145 is used quite frequently as a responsorial psalm, but this is the only time this particular selection of verses is used on a Sunday. The second stanza obviously connects with the Old Testament reading and the Gospel, and the common theme of both is further underlined in the refrain.

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### **Reading II: Ephesians 4:1-6**

In accordance with common critical opinion, we take Ephesians to be the work of a second-generation Paulinist thoroughly steeped in the Apostle's teaching.

Ephesians follows a very clear division, chapters 1-3 being doctrinal and chapters 4-6 parenetical (that is, containing ethical exhortation), so that our reading is the beginning of the parenthesis.

There is a close connection, however, between the two parts of the document. The first part sets forth the unity of Jew and Gentile in the one body, providing a look back at the achievement of the Apostle himself, while the parenthesis begins with an exhortation to unity.

But the exhortation to unity leads back into a further reminder of the theological grounds for the appeal. The "ought" is based on an "is."

There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all Christians, and therefore the writer, speaking in the Apostle's name, can exhort his readers to be what they are. As in Paul himself, the imperative rests upon an indicative.

Unity is both a gift and a task (German: *Gabe* and *Aufgabe*). The imperative to unity is therefore like the imperative to individual sanctification: "Become what you are."

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### **Gospel: John 6:1-15**

As we have seen, part of the background for this familiar story is provided in the less familiar story about Elisha. The same points that we enumerated in the Elisha story reappear in the Johannine feeding and provide the basic framework for the narrative.

But there are other motifs in John, such as the Eucharist and the eschatological or messianic banquet. Note the acts of Jesus: *took*, *gave thanks* (the Hellenistic equivalent of “blessed,” which Mark still preserves in one place), *distributed*.

And when the text says that the people were *filled*, we have a word that is used elsewhere for the repletion of the messianic banquet.

In the ensuing discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum (see next Sunday’s reading), the evangelist develops yet another aspect of the symbolism of this story, namely, the Moses/manna typology. But this typology is scarcely evident in the story itself as John received it from his tradition.

The concluding verse appears to enshrine a genuine historical reminiscence not recorded in the Synop-  
tists. It is impossible to ascertain precisely what happened in the feeding, but it is clear from all the  
Gospel accounts that it represented a crisis in the Lord’s ministry.

We know that at some stage Jesus broke off his Galilean ministry and went to Jerusalem, and in all the  
Gospels the feeding is a pivotal point in the narrative. This shows that its central position is due not  
merely to Mark’s arrangement but goes back to earlier tradition.

In Mark’s first version of the feeding, we are told that Jesus packed the disciples off in a boat while he  
dismissed the crowd. The reason for this becomes clear in John’s note here: it was to prevent the dis-  
ciples from being infected by the dangerous nationalistic messianic enthusiasm of the crowd.

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