

A JOURNEY TOGETHER

Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near. Two simple sentences that say a lot.

Jesus went up the mountain, mountains are places of encounter with God, places where heaven and earth meet. The altar can be seen as a type of mountain rising from the earth. *He sat down.* That's the position of a teacher. *The Jewish feast of Passover was near.* Moses led the people from slavery to freedom; to Mount Sinai where they encountered God and were taught by God. Moses led the people into the desert where they were fed with manna, the bread from heaven

The story continues, Jesus asks the disciples a question. *Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?* We find different responses. There's that of Philip: thoughtful, rational, not bad but incomplete. And there's that of Andrew. He realizes the seriousness of the situation but offers the little there is, Andrew brings people to Jesus. And then there's the response of the boy. Elsewhere Jesus would say: *You must be like little children.* The little way of that boy would make a big difference. God can do a lot with the little that we bring. We can be like either Philip or Andrew or the boy.

Jesus then did three things: *took, gave thanks and distributed.* This should sound very familiar. At the Last Supper, which was the First Eucharist, he did the same thing. And it's what he continues to do at Mass today. This gospel isn't just about a miracle Jesus did, it will lead to a deeper and deeper revelation of who Jesus is. Jesus is the prophet they expected and more. He's the Bread of Life. In Jesus, we can grow in appreciation of all human life: born and unborn, healthy and sick, young and old. Truly God, truly human or as we say each Sunday, Jesus is, *God from God, light from light, true God from true God.*

This isn't just about what happened *back then*, it is about what we're doing *right now*. As we celebrate the Eucharist, we gather together to listen to Jesus' words. Like that young boy, we bring what we have, our prayers, our works, our joys, our sufferings, our fears, our pains, our all, and make a gift of it to God.

Here we enter into Jesus' hour, we enter into his Passover. Here at the altar, we gather around Mount Calvary as heaven and earth continue to meet in the Eucharist. But here, Jesus doesn't just feed us with bread for our stomachs, within hours we will be hungry again. Here he feeds us with himself, the true bread from heaven. Here every Sunday, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the triumph of good over evil, life over death, love over hate.

Here in the mystery of the Eucharist, we celebrate the greatest treasure we have, as Jesus continues to give himself to us. This is why celebrating the Eucharist *every* Sunday is so important. It's not just an obligation, it's a sacred duty. If we truly grasped what happens at Mass, there would be little need to speak of obligation. The Sunday obligation is something positive. It's there to help us not hurt us.

- 1. We go to Mass on Sunday, because it's one way, the most important way, we keep holy the Sabbath.***
- 2. We go to Mass on Sunday, because if we don't worship God, we'll end up worshipping something else.***
- 3. We go to Mass on Sunday, because we need to support each other in faith and we need to receive support.***
- 4. We go to Mass on Sunday, because we need to hear the Word of God proclaimed and explained.***
- 5. We go to Mass on Sunday, to deepen and be strengthened in our identity of who we are as God's people.***

The Eucharist is our Food for the journey. It's something we do together. We're fed together like those in the gospel.

Jesus shared a heavenly gift with others. Each of us in our own way helps to share this gift by the way we live our ordinary lives throughout the week.

Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near. Moses led the people out of slavery to where they were fed with bread from heaven and on a deeper level Jesus does the same. In baptism, he frees us from the slavery to sin and in the Eucharist, he feeds us with

himself. He is our food for the journey of life and with lives of intentional faith we journey together as members of his body, the Church.

Like that young boy, we bring what we have, even if it is little, and we continue to journey to God. We journey to God together in big ways and in every *little way*.