

Homily 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time Sunday, August 2, 2026

We just heard: "*Thus says the LORD: All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare.*"

What we are hearing is God's divine invitation to us. The question is: Do we recognize it? Does it mean anything to us, or are we just not interested? Those of you who are not interested should get up and leave now because the rest of what we will consider here will simply bore you. Those of you, however, who are curious, listen up.

Observers of the American scene tell us that we are a nation of overfed and overweight people. When you go to a shopping mall and look at the shapes of the people there you will see that. What you won't see are those who have a hidden hunger— a hunger for acceptance, a hunger for respect, for love, and for lives that matter.

The same is true when you observe people in a bar. They thirst. They thirst for love, for a life of meaning, and not finding it, they drown their sorrowful loneliness in booze, small talk, and superficial distractions.

Thousands of years ago the author of the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes wrote the following, words that echo in the hearts of many today: "*I surrounded myself with every possible pleasure. I did not withhold my heart and my very self from any joy or any pleasure. Then one day I drew a line under the total of it all and came up with a sum that amounted to nothing.*"

Years ago a famous English poet (his name was T.S. Eliot) wrote a magnificent poem he titled "*The Wasteland.*" It was a devastating look into, and commentary upon, our present-day culture. He showed us how we are spiritually living in a modern desert, a wasteland, and deserted place. Eliot was echoing the cry of Isaiah: Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Jesus took His disciples out into a deserted place, a place of human loneliness, hunger, and thirst. Hungry and thirsty people followed him out there. When the day was getting long, His disciples told him the obvious. "They are hungry," they told him. And Jesus' response? "**Feed them yourselves.**" Which is what He is telling us, His modern-day disciples.

We are likely to reply, as did His disciples back then, "All we've got are five measly barley loaves and only two fish. What good is that in the face of all that has to be done?"

You and I live amongst the shattered dreams of the last two centuries. We have material progress beyond anything that people living before us ever imagined. But spiritually we hunger and thirst. Many

have turned to gurus, psychics, crystals, New Age offerings, and even witchcraft. Pop-psych religions abound, and in spirit of it all, many lead lives of quiet desperation.

What should we do?

The first thing we need to do is to seek the Lord in quiet times of prayer. We should take seriously God's invitation to be fed by him. He will never withdraw His invitation. He offers himself to us, especially here in Holy Communion, but nothing will happen unless and until we respond. Just how have we actually and truly responded to His invitation to us?

To do this we have to turn off our cell phones, our I-pods, and all our electronic gizmos that fill us up with nothing but noise. Are we afraid of silence? Are we afraid that we will have nothing to say to God in our moments of prayer? Are we afraid that God will have nothing to say to us? Just why don't we pray? Are we simply too busy or, on a deeper level, do we fear the silence of prayer? Perhaps our prayers are filled with too much self-accusation, and so, in our shame, we avoid being close to God. But God offers Himself to us in the midst of our failures and sins.

Apart from prayer, what about some moments of thoughtful self-reflection? Summertime provides us with opportunities to see mountains, or rivers, or lakes, and to contemplate the beauty of nature. But, wonderful as all that may be, it's all outside of ourselves. If we are to nourish our hearts and souls, we need to take a look at what's inside ourselves instead of focusing on all that's outside and around us. If we don't have times of self-reflection, we will really hunger and thirst.

Summer gives us chances to let others share themselves with us. Are we willing to admit that we have needs, hunger, and thirsts? Are we willing to admit that we are dependent on others to nourish our hearts and souls? It's wonderful and it's good to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining, but too much of that will leave us with nothing, and then we will truly hunger and thirst.

Finally, we need to ask ourselves: "What really sustains us? What is our true sustenance?" Just what sort of food is feeding us? Junk food? Food that doesn't nourish us? Are our bodies bloated and fat while our souls are lean and hungry? Why should we go on living in spiritual starvation?

Do not leave this Mass thinking you have nothing to give others. Do not think you have nothing to give them in order that they might overcome their hunger and thirst. Jesus is here to give you the Bread of Life, not so that you can keep it all to yourselves but so that you can feed countless numbers of those around you who are looking for the same thing you are – a life of meaning and purpose, a life lived in the closeness of God. After all, He is the one who will do the feeding. All we have to do is share His food – His tender loving mercies, His presence, and His love. If you don't, those in the world around you will continue to starve.

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