

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – JULY 9TH 2006.

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, July 9th is the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost. The Holy Gospel reading for this Sunday is about the miraculous feeding of five thousand people with five loaves of bread. Of all Jesus' miracles, this is the only one recorded in all four gospels.

When Jesus and His disciples sought a lonely place to rest, they found instead a large crowd of more than five thousand people waiting for them. When Jesus saw the crowd, He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He taught them many things, spoke to them of the Kingdom of God and healed them physically, as well as spiritually. When His disciples came to Him and said to send them away because it is getting dark and they have to eat, Jesus' commanded them instead to give them something to eat.

After learning that they have only five loaves of bread and two small fish, Jesus asked that they be brought to Him and directed the disciples to seat the people in grounds. Jesus took the bread and fish, looked up to heaven, blessed and broke them, and told the disciples to give to the crowd - familiar sounding words we hear every Sunday in our church during the Holy Qurbana. They all ate and were satisfied and the leftover was twelve basketfuls; those who ate numbered about five thousand, excluding the women and children.

The significance of this miracle of feeding of such a great multitude points to God's giving of manna in the wilderness for the people of Israel under Moses' leadership. Jesus is the True Bread of heaven that can satisfy the deepest hunger we experience. The feeding of five thousand shows the remarkable generosity of God and His great kindness towards us. When God gives, He gives abundantly. He gives more than we need for ourselves that we may have something to share with others, especially those who are in need.

“Lord, you satisfy, and feed us and fill us with gratitude and give us a generous heart that we may freely share with others what you have given to us.”

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for Sunday, July 9th, 2006.

(Fifth Sunday After Pentecost)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Exodus	-	23: 14-19
Psalms	-	16: 1-11
Isaiah	-	40: 27-31

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles:	Acts	-	9: 10-18
Epistles of St. Paul:	II Corinthians	-	5: 14-20
Holy Gospel:	St. Luke	-	9: 10-17

With prayers,
Thomas Alex