

Sunday 18th (A) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 14,13-21): On hearing about the death of John the Baptist, Jesus set out secretly by boat for a secluded place (...).

When Jesus went ashore, He saw the crowd gathered there and He had compassion on them (...) Then He made everyone sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fishes, raised his eyes to heaven, pronounced the blessing, broke the loaves and handed them to the disciples to distribute to the people. And they all ate, and everyone had enough; then the disciples gathered up the leftovers, filling twelve baskets. About five thousand men had eaten there besides women and children.

Sacrament of the Eucharist (the Holy Mass)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, with the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus Christ heralds something big: the Holy Mass. In it, His Body and His Blood —lovingly "divided" in the Cross— are now "shared" as "Bread" and "Drink", to feed our supernatural life. In the Eucharist, such a human gesture as "divide" to "share" acquires an unparalleled depth: Jesus giving Himself to us. The greatest thing in the world!

The "first Mass" was the Last Supper. Jesus Christ fulfilled what He had said in His speech of the Good Shepherd: "No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily". His life will be taken in the Cross but He was already offering it. At the Last Supper —by instituting the gift of the Eucharist— He "gives us" the pain of the Cross, transforming His own violent death into an act of free offering by others.

—O Lord, we give you thanks for Eucharist. In It we profit from Your hospitality: You receive us in your Son, Jesus Christ crucified and risen.