Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (*Mt* 14,13-21): When Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself (...). When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them (...). He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over– twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting 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.