

Monday of the Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 14,13-21): (...) Late in the afternoon, his disciples came to him and said, «We are in a lonely place and it is now late. You should send these people away, so they can go to the villages and buy something for themselves to eat». But Jesus (...) 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 (...).

The "Bread" and the "Blessing" in the Eucharist

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

(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, two quite peculiar elements of the Eucharist are highlighted. First: to institute the Holy Eucharist Jesus chooses "bread", because it contains the mystery of Passion. Bread presupposes that the seed —grain of wheat— that has fallen on the earth, "has died", and then the new ear can grow out of this death. The earthly bread may become the bearer of Christ's presence, because in unites in itself "death" and "resurrection".

Second, the "blessing". We are told that Jesus took bread and said the blessing (and the Thanksgiving). We are not to eat without giving thanks to God for the gift He offers. The Words of Institution are in this context of prayer; appreciation becomes blessing and transformation in them: finally, Christ Himself is the "bread of life" offered to us as a spiritual food.

—May you be blessed forever, O God of the Universe, because in the new "manna" you deliver yourself to us through the warm love of the Son.