

17 April 2026 - Friday of the Second Week of Easter

[Acts 5:34-42; John 6:1-15](#)

H O M I L Y

The feeding of the five thousand is the only sign performed by Jesus that is recorded in all four Gospels. This shows the importance the early Christians attached to it. Today we read this account in John's version. John recounts this event after some 65 or 70 years of reflection. It is not the sign or the miracle as such that interests him. His entire account centers on the person of Jesus. He shows us Jesus sharing simply, very simply, without counting, without paying attention to the size of the crowd.

At the beginning of the account, there is one of those little mysterious phrases characteristic of John. He says: "*It was a little before the Passover...*" This means that the multiplication of the loaves of which he speaks, this sharing of what had been brought, was an essential dimension of the Paschal mystery, and is therefore also of the Eucharistic celebration. The twelve baskets of leftover pieces correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. It is therefore also an essential aspect of the Church.

Jesus crossed the lake with His disciples and went up into the mountains. From there, He looked up and saw the large crowd following Him, and sensed their need for food, even before anyone had expressed that need. Philip, to whom Jesus first explained the situation, could think of no solution other than a financial and mathematical one: "*Two hundred days' wages would not be enough for each of them to have a small piece of bread.*" Philip's attitude undoubtedly mirrors our own, since we are constantly tempted to place greater importance in our lives on the material things we possess, the things we can count, even if it is with the desire to give them away—which is also a form of exercising power.

The solution proposed by Andrew and chosen by Jesus is different. It is that of sharing. When there is true sharing, there is generally enough for everyone. Those gathered around Jesus are not called upon to line up in single file to receive their meagre portion from the hands of generous benefactors; they are invited to lie down as was customary at banquets, and particularly for the Passover meal, so as to share a meal in dignity with their fellow diners. And when everyone is reclining on the lush grass (a sign of the Kingdom's abundance), Jesus Himself distributes the food to them, just as a host does for his guests.

Document extrait du [site de l'abbaye Notre-Dame de Scourmont](#), qui se trouve sur le territoire de Forges, à sept kilomètres au sud de la ville de Chimay, en Belgique. Notre-Dame de Scourmont est une abbaye de l'Ordre Cistercien de la Stricte Observance.

The crowds followed Jesus because they had seen the healings and other miracles He had performed and wanted to see more. But Jesus is not interested in playing the miracle-worker. He is concerned with people's needs. Similarly, at the end of the story, when the crowd wants to proclaim Him the Messiah, He withdraws alone to the mountains.

In a community, we are all called to serve one another. Our human tendency is to seek roles that put us in the spotlight or allow us to exercise a certain power. Jesus shows us that, for Him, it is quite the opposite. The only thing that interests Him is to serve. We know, as the celebrations of the Holy Days have reminded us, that this cost Him dearly. Likewise, today, in the first reading, we see the Apostles, who have just been beaten, overjoyed to have been deemed worthy to suffer a little for the name of Jesus.

Let us therefore strive to live in the same spirit of mutual service, to shun honors and material advantages rather than seek them, and if this brings us suffering, to be glad to join it to that of Christ and his Apostles.

Armand Veilleux