

Reading for Weekday in the Third Week of Eastertide

Monday 20th April

First reading

Acts 6:8-15

‘They could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.’

In those days: Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly instigated men who said, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’ And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and they set up false witnesses who said, ‘This man never ceases to speak words against this Holy Place and the Law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.’ And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 119(118):23-24. 26-27. 29-30. R1b

Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord!

or: Alleluia.

Though princes sit plotting against me,
your servant ponders your statutes.
See, your decrees are my delight;
your statutes are my counsellors.
I declared my ways and you answered me;
teach me your statutes.
Make me grasp the way of your precepts,
and I will ponder your wonders.
Keep me from the way of falsehood;
grant me mercy by your law.
I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
your decrees I have upheld.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 4:4b

Alleluia, alleluia.

One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

Alleluia.

Gospel

John 6:22-29

‘Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life.’

After Jesus had fed the five thousand, the disciples saw him walking on the lake. On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the lake saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So

when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do, to be doing the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

When Jesus fed the hungry people in the desert, they were concerned only about their immediate needs. They did not trust the goodness of God who cares for them; nor did they think of sharing with others whatever food they had. They did not listen *deeply* to the Lord's words, to discover their implications for daily life. Our church links the multiplication of bread and fish with the gift of the Eucharist, Jesus' very own body and blood given for the life of the world.

There is a great difference between ordinary bread with a short shelf-life that grows stale and another food that leads to eternal life. Jesus fed the people with bread and fish, aware that normal hunger must be satisfied. Then, as people continued looking for still more to eat, he invited them to look for what would feed their deeper hunger. He gave them more than bread, nourishing them with God's own presence. We need material food because we are material beings, but our search must go deeper. There is more to life than satisfying our physical desires. There is a deeper hunger that must be met if we are to live life to the full and be fully at peace.

Jesus offers us the spiritual food that can satisfy the hunger of our hearts. Our deepest seeking is leading us towards God for as St Augustine said, "You have made us for yourself and our hearts can never be at rest until they rest in You."