

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 25, 2021

So, Chapter 6 in the Gospel of John introduces the emphasis on the Eucharist, using the Bread of Life Discourse that is to follow. Here John suggests Jesus as the Bread of Life, revealing his Sonship of God. In our first Reading from Book of Kings, the Prophet Elisha prefigures the Eucharist with barley loaves and fresh grain.

The Gospel of John sets the stage with all the signs: the ministry of healing the sick, up on a high mountain, the feast of Passover was near, crowd coming to him needing nourishment.

Let us notice the actions of Jesus:

he took the loaves

gave thanks, [blessing]

Distribute to the people.

These are the principle actions of the Eucharistic Prayer included in the Didache, the 2nd century document outlining the order of service for the early church.

The last verses of today's reading continue to launch the drama. This is the One who is to come to save God's people; he will be the sacrificial Lamb of the Passover. So, Jesus knowing everything, once again withdrew to the mountain to escape - for now.

We, the 21st century people of God, it is we who now must continue the work: we must gather the people, take the barley loaves, give thanks, bless the bread and wine, and feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give the blessing, distribute the peace of Christ, and nurture the caring, the kindness of God.