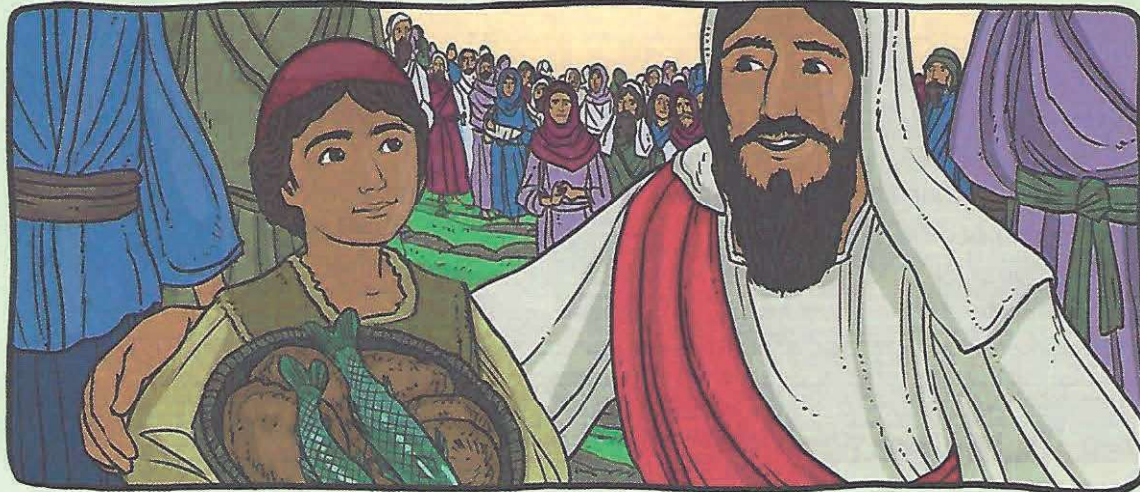


Chapter 2: Jesus Cares for Us



Introduction

There are different ways to show people that you love them. You can give someone a big hug. You can tell them you love them. You can give someone a gift you made for them. You can feed them when they are hungry. Who makes your favorite meal for you?

God also shows his love for us by feeding us. All the food we have comes from God's gifts of earth, sun, and rain. Jesus fed people when big, hungry crowds followed him. He still feeds us today through the Eucharist.

Scripture Story: Jesus Feeds a Huge Crowd

The Bible has several stories about Jesus feeding thousands of people. Let's read one of these stories:

Another one of his disciples, Andrew, who was Simon Peter's brother, said, "There is a boy here who has five loaves of barley bread and two fish. But they will certainly not be enough for all these people."

"Make the people sit down," Jesus told them. (There was a lot of grass there.) So all the people sat down; there were about five thousand men. Jesus took the bread, gave thanks to God, and distributed it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish, and they all had as much as they wanted. (John 6:8-11)

Isn't it amazing that Jesus fed five thousand men and their families with only five loaves of bread and two fish? Jesus could do amazing things like this because he is God. Jesus cared for the people and did not want them to go hungry, so he fed them. Jesus cares for you too!

Jesus Feeds Us Today

Jesus still feeds us today, every time we attend Mass. During the Mass, Jesus feeds us with the Eucharist, his own Body and Blood. He does this because he loves us. The gifts of bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood during the Mass. You will learn more about that later.

Another name for the Eucharist is **Holy Communion**. The word *communion* means "a very close friendship." When we receive Holy Communion, we grow closer to Jesus. Through Holy Communion, the Holy Spirit also helps us grow closer to our friends and family.

God's Treasure of the Eucharist

During the Mass, Jesus cares for us by feeding us with the **Eucharist**. Because of this, the Mass is the most important celebration in the Catholic Church. It is the heart and highest point of the Church's life. You are preparing to fully share in this life of the Church. During the Mass, we, as members of the Church, participate in Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for the salvation of the whole world. Through his sacrifice, Jesus gave the Church the treasure of his saving power. Jesus gives this treasure to each one of us when we receive his Body and Blood.

The Mass always has these four parts: Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and Concluding Rites. Let's look at these four parts:

- The **Introductory Rites** is the name for what occurs at the beginning of Mass. It includes a gathering song, a procession, the Sign of the Cross, a welcome from the priest, and a prayer asking for God's forgiveness.
- The **Liturgy of the Word** is the part of the Mass when we listen to the readings from the Bible. After we listen to the readings, the priest or deacon helps us understand them. We also pray a prayer that expresses what we believe in as Catholics. Then we pray for the Church and for all people.
- The **Liturgy of the Eucharist** is the part of Mass where the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus and we receive Holy Communion.
- The **Concluding Rites** occur at the end of the Mass. The priest blesses us and reminds us that we are called to serve God and others when we leave.

Even though the Mass has four parts, we always celebrate them together as one single act of worship.

Things to Remember

- Jesus cares for us and for all people.
- The Eucharist is a way Jesus shows his care for us by feeding us with his own Body and Blood.
- Holy Communion is another name for Eucharist.
- The four parts of the Mass are the Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rites.