



瀬田の丘

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Today's Word

The Eighteenth Sunday, Year A (2 August)

Parish Priest: Father Hiroshi Konishi

First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-3

Second Reading: Letter to the Romans 8:35, 37-39

Gospel Reading: Matthew 14:13-21

From the Three Readings

The three readings are interspersed with numerous symbols and images. The First Reading begins with the words, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters" (v. 1, Franciscan Translation). In Jewish tradition, it is said that the "water" here symbolizes the Torah, the Word of God. With this background in mind, as we read today's passages—such as "If you listen to me, you will have good food" (v. 2) and "Listen carefully" (v. 3)—images related to words, and specifically the Word of God, will come to the fore.

The Second Reading also speaks of symbolism: "Who can separate us from the love of Christ? ... Nothing can separate us from the love of God" (vv. 35, 39). It is rare in life to be physically separated from something. Yet, we have many experiences of being separated spiritually or emotionally. It is painful to be separated from the One who loves us. However, no matter what situation we find ourselves in, we will never be severed from the bond of love with Jesus, who loved us first.

In the Gospel reading, symbolic expressions such as "bread" and "being filled" appear. When Jesus takes the bread, "looks up to heaven, gives thanks, and breaks it" (verse 19), the bread is transformed into the bread of life, so that "everyone ate and was satisfied." This bread is the Word of God, and Jesus Himself, who is the Word of God made flesh (see John 1:14). By receiving this bread, we are firmly bound to the love of Jesus.

Incidentally, at the beginning of Chapter 14 of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is told of the death of John the Baptist. John's disciples reported to Jesus the death of John, their teacher. Upon hearing this, Jesus withdrew by himself to a deserted place (verse 13). The events that follow are today's reading.

The passage as a whole can be divided into three sections.

Verses 13-14: Explanation of the background of the event

Verses 15-18: Dialogue between Jesus and His disciples

Verses 19-21: The miracle performed by Jesus

The same story appears in the Gospel of Mark (parallel passage: Chapter 6, verses 30 - 34). However, in Mark, the apostles return after being sent out, and out of concern for them, Jesus says, “Come, let us go by ourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” (verse 31). In Matthew, however, the disciples are not mentioned. They do not appear until verse 15 of Chapter 14. Although it is the same story, the two Gospels seem to convey different messages.

Verse 13 says, “He withdrew.” An analysis of the original text reveals that this is in the third-person singular. The subject is Jesus; the disciples are not included. In other words, this account in the Gospel of Matthew seems to focus on Jesus.

Also, please note the phrase “they will go; I will not send them” in verses 15 and 16. The Greek uses the verb **aperkomai**. It is a compound word formed from the preposition **apo** and the verb **erkomai**. **Apo** means “from,” and **erkomai** means “to come,” but when combined, it means “to leave a place and move to another place.” If we emphasize the act of leaving, it becomes “to leave from...”

Announcement

August 15, starting at 10:30 a.m. : Mass of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary