

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2026

(Isaiah 55:1-3; Psalm 145; Romans 8:35,37-39; Matthew 14:13-21)

When I was first ordained, the Parish Priest asked Pam and I to look after the Baptism Preparation for the Parish. So far it has been a fulfilling ministry. We get to meet lots of new [and nearly new] parents. Some we have gotten to know better than others. In the seven years we have been providing Baptism Preparation classes more than 200 children have been Baptised. It has given us an insight into how different people approach this First Sacrament of Initiation.

Today's first reading gives us an opportunity to look at how we approach 'The Water'. Isaiah, says *"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters."* Everyone who comes to our class is in search of Baptism, but perhaps not all for the same reason. Some are genuinely looking to start the faith journey for their children, others it may be because that's what their parents or grandparents expect, it might be the opportunity to get into a good school it might be the chance to have a family get together. Our role at the Baptism Preparation session is to remind them why we all approach the waters of Baptism. To help us get the message across we use short films with questions and discussions.

Isaiah continues *Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not does not satisfy?"* Part of the conversations with the parents is about what kind of adult they would like their child to grow up to be. We emphasise that they, the parents and Godparents are the role models the children will follow, they will practice what they see. Children will see what their parents value. If they value possessions then the children will value possessions, if they value love and forgiveness then they will value love and forgiveness. Isaiah is telling us that we need to concentrate on what is important.

Isaiah goes on *"Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, delight yourself in rich food."* We remind the parents that they are part of a community. A community who gathers each week to listen to the Word of God and be fed by it, digest it, allowing it to live in them. Which in turn they are encouraged to take out into the world they live in. Isaiah, tells us that all of this is so that *"your soul may live."* And that we can share in the same promise God made to King David. Everlasting life.

As part of the Baptism Preparation, we often urge the parents to make sure their children see them reconcile with one another after they have been upset with one another. We take this opportunity to remind them of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and encourage them to celebrate that Sacrament before they make the vows on behalf of their children. These same vows are included in the Creed, which we say each Sunday. We state our belief in God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit and in the Church which He founded and everything She teaches. Beliefs are easier to state when things are good, but more difficult when things get tougher.

The second reading today, helps us to look at how we deal with adversity. We all have times in our life when we struggle. Struggles come in all sorts of ways and St Paul lists some of them. St Paul tells us that no matter what is troubling us, we must remember that Jesus loves us and with His help we can conquer every problem.

In today's Gospel we hear of other's approaching Jesus at the water. The crowd gathered as Jesus came ashore; they had already been drawn towards Him. If we

look closely at the encounter in today's Gospel, it is similar to our Mass. The people gather, Jesus heals them, no doubt they will have also listened to the voice of Jesus before He took the bread, offered, blessed it, broke it and shared it with them. That day Jesus took a little and changed it into a lot. So much that there were twelve baskets left over. God's generosity is boundless, if we as parents, grandparents and God parents can make sure that our children grow up knowing how much God loves them, then we are giving them the best possible opportunities in this life; as well as hope for the next life.

The Baptism Preparation we do, doesn't just cover the Baptism Service, it is an outline of how the Church would like parents to approach the way they bring up their children; to get to know God better. By knowing God we can get to love Him, by Loving Him we can form a relationship with Him, By having a relationship with God we can be better people, helping us to spread His love by what we do and what we say.

That day when Jesus fed the five thousand, He was setting us an example. An example which is repeated to this day. If we, who have a little, are prepared to offer what we have for the greater good, then Jesus will multiply that gift. Whether it is through lots of other people joining with us or through His Divine Providence, Jesus shares the love in a way that only He can, because Jesus is love.

Ubi Caritas et Amor, Deus ibi est. [Where there is charity and love, God is there.]

Further Reading

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

CCC 2828-2837: give us this day our daily bread

CCC 1335: miracle of loaves prefigures the Eucharist

CCC 1391-1401: the fruits of Holy Communion¹

Please accompany in your prayers

- All those who are sick, either at home or in hospital, especially those who have very few or no visitors.
- Those who have died and those who grieve for them.
- The success of the Pastoral Area Mission Plan.
- Those struggling with addiction.
- Those preparing for Baptism, either as an individual or as a parent.
- Firefighters throughout the world battling to keep communities safe.

¹ [Homiletic Directory, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments](#)

Deacon Tony

1st August 2026