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Scripture

John 6:1-15

¹After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Devotional

Just as God provided for Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness, so Jesus miraculously provides food for this crowd. The parallel was not lost on those 5,000 in attendance, as they took Jesus to be "the prophet" whom Moses predicted (Deut 18) and tried to install him as king by force. But Jesus had already resisted the temptations of Satan to seize his kingdom with grandeur and spectacle, and he does the same here. The significance of the miracle, as Jesus will explain later in Capernaum, is far greater than the crowd had thought: Jesus is not just a king, he is the New Manna. He is the bread that comes down from heaven and provides "life" to all. As we wait in the desert of Lent, we put aside what the world offers to sustain us so that we might hunger for the Bread of Life.

Prayer

Lord, we are tempted to eat what should not be eaten, to make our bread from stones. But we live only by your Word come down from heaven to become flesh. Teach us to feast on that Bread and to receive our very life from it. Let it sustain us in our efforts to embody your kingdom in the world. Amen.