

Pray with Scripture, Meet God

Jesus: The Bread of Life
Meeting Jesus in John 6
Week One: John 6:1-15

John 6:1-15

Day One: John 6:1-4

Reflection question: Imagine yourself in this passage. Where do you desire to meet Jesus today: in the crowd following Jesus, curing the sick, or with the disciples on the mountain?

Day Two: John 6:5-9

Reflection Question: What does it tell you about Jesus that he noticed the crowd was hungry--and wanted to do something about it?

Day Three: John 6:10-13

Reflection Question: What does it mean to you that Jesus not only provided enough that each person was full but that there were plenty of leftovers?

Day Four: John 6:14-15

Reflection question: In the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, people begin to see who Jesus is, “the one who is to come into the world.” When, in meeting Jesus, did you gain a deeper understanding of who he is?

Day Five: John 6:1-15

Reflection question: After you read the full passage today, sit quietly for a few minutes. What does it mean to you that Jesus was the first to notice the hunger of the crowd, and took measures to feed them? What is your hunger that you would like Jesus to satisfy?

How to Pray Each Day

Pray:

“Lord Jesus, you who are the Son of the living God, teach me to listen to what you tell me in the holy Scriptures, and to discover your face there.”—Guigo II, the Carthusian (ca. 1113-1193)

Read the day’s passage once, slowly:

Take 2-3 minutes to ponder the passage. Note any phrase, word or image that stands out for you.

Read the passage a second time slowly:

Take a few minutes to ponder the passage again. Stay with the text: Why do you think the words or image stand out the first time? Is your mind drawn to another part of the text?

What do you think God is trying to tell you through the text today?

Consider the Reflection Question:

Jot down any thoughts or responses you have to this question—also make note of any questions that rose from the text.

Pray

1. Take a few minutes to be still and present to God.
2. Share your thoughts, questions with God.
3. Is God “speaking” to you? Remember: it may not be a voice you hear but a nudge, a consolation or an insight. If you are keeping a journal, you may want to write these down.
4. When you feel done, say a quick prayer thanking God for this time with him.

Optional Small group session to follow these daily reflections:

Pray the following prayer or one in your own words:

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Allow each person to reflect upon their encounters with the Word this past week. They may wish to review any notes or journaling they did at that time.

Read

- Have one person read the complete passage twice, with a 1-2 minute pause between readings.
- Allow time for silent reflection.
- What stands out when you hear the text, altogether? Is it something that stood out before, or is it something new?

Meditate

- Have someone else read the passage once more.
- Where do you meet God today in the Word? Does he speak, or communicate in another way?
 - Sit quietly with God and wait for his response.

Ponder

Allow time for each person to quietly reflect upon these words from St. John Paul II: We have listened to the evangelical narration: with five barley loaves and two fish, offered by a boy, Jesus feeds about five thousand people. But the latter, not understanding the depth of the "sign" in which they have been involved, are convinced that they have at last found the King-Messiah, who will solve the political and economic problems of their nation. Before this obtuse misunderstanding of his mission, Jesus withdraws, all alone, to the mountains. We, too, beloved Brothers and Sisters, have followed Jesus and continue to follow him. But we can and must ask ourselves "With what interior attitude?" With the true one of *faith*, which Jesus expected of the Apostles and of the multitude that he had fed, or with an attitude of incomprehension? ... And man, especially modern man, is so hungry: hungry for truth, justice, love, peace, beauty; but, above all, hungry for God. "We must hunger for God!", St Augustine exclaims. It is he, the heavenly Father, who gives us the true bread! (Homily, Castel Gandolfo, July 29, 1979. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19790729_ville-pontificie.html (May 22, 2019))

Reflection questions:

- As you begin this series, for what do you hunger? Do you believe Jesus already knows of your hunger?

Discuss

Allow each person to share what they encountered in their prayers this past week as in this session. They can respond to any question from their daily reflection or this session; or share an insight or experience that rose out of their prayer.

As the discussion draws to a close, ask if there are any needs members would like the group to pray for. If it is possible, at this time move to a chapel or the church for the closing prayer.

Pray

- Allow a time of silent prayer, allowing each person to offer their own silent prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and petition to the Lord.
- Allow additional time to sit in the Lord's presence.
- If possible and appropriate, allow each person to offer any prayers aloud.
- Close with prayer as is the custom of your community. It could be: a spontaneous prayer, a parish prayer for renewal said together, an Our Father, Glory Be or prayer to the patron saint of the parish asking his/her intercession, etc.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE, MEET GOD

Jesus: The Bread of Life ***Meeting Jesus in John 6*** **Week Two: John 6:22-29**

John 6:22-29

Day One: John 6:22-24

Reflection question: Imagine you are in the crowd, making your way to Jesus. What about Jesus intrigues you enough to cross the sea to see him again?

Day Two: John 6:25

Reflection Question: When you find Jesus, what questions would you have for him?

Day Three: John 6:26-27

Reflection Question: Jesus declares that the crowd sought him out for physical nourishment when what he desires to give is spiritual nourishment. For what are *you* spiritually hungry?

Day Four: John 6:28-29

Reflection question: Jesus responds to the crowd's question, "What should we do?" with "Believe in the one he sent." Do you struggle with believing in Jesus vs. doing? What helps you keep a balance?

Day Five: John 6:22-29

Reflection question: After you read the full passage today, sit quietly for a few minutes. Imagine yourself standing in the crowd surrounding Jesus. Listen to him say, "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent." What does it mean to you today to *believe in Jesus*? Is that thought challenging, consoling, or both?

How to Pray Each Day

Pray:

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Read the passage a second time slowly:

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What do you think God is trying to tell you through the text today?

Consider the Reflection Question:

Jot down any thoughts or responses you have to this question—also make note of any questions that rose from the text.

Pray

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Read

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- Allow time for silent reflection.
- What stands out when you hear the text, altogether? Is it something that stood out before, or is it something new?

Meditate

- Have someone else read the passage once more.
- Where do you meet God today in the Word? Does he speak, or communicate in another way?
 - Sit quietly with God and wait for his response.

Ponder

Allow time for each person to quietly reflect upon these words from St. Teresa of Calcutta:

“We may not have people hungry for a plate of rice or for a piece of bread in New York City, but there is a tremendous hunger and a tremendous feeling of unwantedness everywhere. And that is really a very great poverty. We don’t expect hunger here today, in Western countries. We don’t expect, maybe, that terrible loneliness. But everywhere today hunger is not only for a piece of bread, but hunger for God, hunger for love.”

Reflection questions:

- For what do you hunger today, a hunger that only God can fill?
- Do you believe that Jesus can satisfy your deepest hungers?
- Has God satisfied your hunger before?

Discuss

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PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE, MEET GOD

Jesus: The Bread of Life *Meeting Jesus in John 6* Week Three: John 6:30-35

John 6:30-35

Day One: John 6:30-31

Reflection question: The crowd asks for a sign from Jesus. What questions do you have for him? What more would you like to know about him?

Day Two: John 6:32-33

Reflection Question: What does it mean for you that God the Father gives life-giving bread?

Day Three: John 6:34

Reflection Question: What are you hungry for? What do your hungers reveal to you about yourself?

Day Four: John 6:35

Reflection question: Do you believe that Jesus can satisfy your every hunger? Your every thirst?

Day Five: John 6:30-35

Reflection question: After you read the full passage today, sit quietly for a few minutes. Imagine yourself standing in the crowd surrounding Jesus. Listen to him say, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." Are those words inviting, challenging, consoling?

How to Pray Each Day

Pray:

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What do you think God is trying to tell you through the text today?

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Meditate

- Have someone else read the passage once more.
- Where do you meet God today in the Word? Does he speak, or communicate in another way?
 - Sit quietly with God and wait for his response.

Ponder

Allow time for each person to quietly reflect upon these words from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

1374 The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as "the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend." In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.*" "This presence is called 'real' - by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be 'real' too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present."

Reflection questions:

- Consider, along with the *Catechism* paragraph above, this verse from the week's passage again, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." What does it mean for you that the Jesus present in the Eucharist is the same Jesus who uttered these words?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus is wholly present: body and blood, soul and divinity, in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist?
- Does that challenge how you pray before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle or in the monstrance? How you pray before him during Mass?

Discuss

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PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE, MEET GOD

Jesus: The Bread of Life ***Meeting Jesus in John 6*** **Week Four: John 6:35-50**

John 6:35-50

Day One: John 6:35-40

Reflection question: What does it mean for you that Jesus will not reject anyone who comes to him? That the Father desires for every person who finds Jesus to have eternal life?

Day Two: John 6:41-45

Reflection Question: Jesus says, “Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me.” Have you heard the voice of the Father? Have you learned from him? Has it helped you come closer to Jesus?

Day Three: John 6:46-47

Reflection Question: What does it mean to you that God offers you the bread of life? Do you believe that is possible?

Day Four: John 6:48-50

Reflection question: Jesus says this bread is different from manna: that those who eat it will not die. What kind of life do you think Jesus is offering to you?

Day Five: John 6:35-50

Reflection question: After you read the full passage today, sit quietly for a few minutes. To what part of this passage are you drawn? Why do you think that is so? What is God speaking to you today through his Word?

How to Pray Each Day

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- Where do you meet God today in the Word? Does he speak, or communicate in another way?
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Ponder

Scholars and saints throughout the centuries have pointed to this passage from the prophet Isaiah to describe the meal that Jesus desires to set before those who will believe in him in the passage from John:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations. He will destroy death forever. The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces; the reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.

Reflection questions:

- What imagery stands out for you in this passage? Why do you think that is so?
- What does it mean that God desires to set before you a feast that will destroy death?

Discuss

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PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE, MEET GOD

Jesus: The Bread of Life ***Meeting Jesus in John 6*** **Week Five: John 6:51-59**

John 6:51-59

Day One: John 6:51-52

Reflection question: What does it mean to you that Jesus gave his very flesh for the life of the world?

Day Two: John 6:53-54

Reflection Question: Jesus says those who eat his flesh and drink his blood will have eternal life. Is this saying challenging, consoling, or both?

Day Three: John 6:55-56

Reflection Question: Jesus promises those who eat his flesh and drink his blood that he will remain in them. What would it mean for you to be united with Jesus?

Day Four: John 6:57-59

Reflection question: Imagine sitting in the synagogue at Capernaum. What would have been your reaction to these words of Jesus? What questions would you have?

Day Five: John 6:51-59

Reflection question: After you read the full passage today, sit quietly for a few minutes. To what part of this passage are you drawn? Is it a passage that is challenging, confusing, or consoling—or a bit of all three? After pondering the passage, what questions might you have for Jesus?

How to Pray Each Day

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- Where do you meet God today in the Word? Does he speak, or communicate in another way?
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Ponder

Allow time for each person to quietly reflect upon these words of Servant of God Dorothy Day:

It took me a long time as a convert to realize the presence of Christ as Man in the Sacrament. He is the same Jesus Who walked on earth, Who slept in the boat as the tempest arose, Who hungered in the desert, Who prayed in the garden, Who conversed with the woman by the well, Who rested at the house of Martha and Mary, Who wandered through the cornfields, picking the ears of corn to eat.

Jesus is there as Man. He is there, Flesh and Blood, Soul and Divinity. He is our leader Who is always with us. Do you wonder that Catholics are exultant in this knowledge, that their Leader is with them? "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." "Another Letter to An Agnostic," **America**, 5 (September 1, 1934):491.

Reflection questions:

- How does the knowledge that within the Blessed Sacrament is the person of Jesus--Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity--affect your prayer life? Your prayer before the Blessed Sacrament? Your worship at Mass?
- What unanswered questions do you have for Jesus today?

Discuss

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PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE, MEET GOD

Jesus: The Bread of Life ***Meeting Jesus in John 6*** **Week Five: John 6:60-69**

John 6:60-69

Day One: John 6:60-61

Reflection question: What is hard and shocking about Jesus' words from last week?

Day Two: John 6:62-63

Reflection Question: When have Jesus' words given you spirit and life?

Day Three: John 6:64-65

Reflection Question: Does your relationship with God the Father help you believe Jesus' words you have prayed with these past weeks? If so, how? What do Jesus' words about his Father reveal to you about their relationship?

Day Four: John 6:66-69

Reflection question: Imagine you are in the scene. Where are you today: walking away, standing with Jesus, with the disciples? Imagine Jesus asking you, "Do you also want to leave?" How would you answer?

Day Five: John 6:60-69

Reflection question: After you read the full passage today, sit quietly for a few minutes. To what part of this passage are you drawn? Why do you think that is so? What is God speaking to you today through his Word?

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- Have someone else read the passage once more.
- Where do you meet God today in the Word? Does he speak, or communicate in another way?
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Ponder

Allow time for each person to quietly reflect upon these words of St. Ephrem the Syrian:

He called the bread his living body and he filled it with himself and his Spirit . . . He who eats it with faith, eats Fire and Spirit . . . Take and eat this, all of you, and eat with it the Holy Spirit. For it is truly my body and whoever eats it will have eternal life.—*Sermo IV in Hebdomadam Sanctam*: CSCO 413/Syr. 182, 55, quoted by St. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003), n. 17.

Reflection questions:

- “When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath. In their joint mission, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct but inseparable.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 689
What would it mean to you that when you receive Holy Communion, you receive both Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
- When praying before the tabernacle or at Eucharistic Adoration, what would it mean that you are in the presence of all three persons of the Holy Trinity: the Father, his son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit?

Discuss

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