



Bringing Home the Word

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
August 2, 2026

A Free Meal, but With Demands

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

When God invites you to a meal, you never have to pay. It might be free, but it does have its demands. In fact, you are expected to open yourself to a total transformation. In the first reading, Isaiah mentions the renewal of an everlasting covenant. Perhaps a small dinner fee might be easier to handle.

This reading is quite tender. The needy are invited to a meal of grain, wine, and milk. Their neediness might explain why the meal is free. The invitation is magnanimous: “Come to me...that you may have life”

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 55:1–3

All you who are thirsty, come to the water!

Romans 8:35, 37–39

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?

Matthew 14:13–21

They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full.

(Isaiah 55:3). The gospel story of the multiplication of the fishes and loaves reveals the same magnanimity. Jesus feeds all those who have followed him, no questions asked. This story follows a long tradition of miraculous feedings, which include the manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16) and Elisha multiplying bread (2 Kings 4:42–44).

It’s natural to wonder just how that bread and those fish were able to satisfy so many, but there is another aspect of the story that should not be overlooked. The words, “He said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples” (Matthew 14:19) will appear again in the account of the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26). Though this was the ritual performed at the daily Jewish meal, the eucharistic allusion is unmistakable.

Perhaps it is the psalm response that throws light on the primary focus of the readings. There, the graciousness and kindness of the Lord are acclaimed: “You open wide your hand / and satisfy the desire of every living thing” (Psalm 145:16). †

When God invites you to a meal, open yourself to a total transformation.

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

[Friendship with the Lord] is achieved first of all in liturgical and community prayer, in which we do not decide what to hear from the Word of God, but it is he himself who speaks to us through the Church; it is then achieved in personal prayer.... Only when we speak with God can we also speak about him.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, ROME,
JANUARY 14, 2026



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Are you grateful for the good things in your life that were free?
- Are you grateful God has used you to bless others?



Martha and Mary: Toward a Balanced Life

William A. Anderson, DMin

Jesus tells a story about an unlikely Samaritan who goes out of his way to care for a man robbed and left for dead on a road. The parable of the Good Samaritan helps Jesus' listeners (including us) understand that everyone is our neighbor, and sometimes we must interrupt our plans to care for another person and do the work of the Lord. Immediately after this story, we hear of Jesus visiting the home of a woman named Martha. Luke makes no immediate mention of Mary, the sister of Martha, who is also present in the story, yet she will appear as part of the central message of the passage. Martha is busy preparing the house for their guest, while Mary sits at the feet of Jesus. Martha complains about this.

Many spiritual writers have used this passage as a sign that the contemplative life is more perfect than the active life. Some modern commentators have taken a different approach. In Jesus' day, women were not allowed to sit at the feet of a rabbi

and learn. Martha could be complaining not that Mary is not serving Jesus as women were expected to do, but that she is doing what women were forbidden to do. Jesus declares that Mary has chosen the better part by learning as a disciple rather than being worried about many things.

Jesus did not condemn the active life in this passage, nor did he have any intention of comparing the active with the contemplative life. Luke's placement of these two stories together suggests that disciples need to seek balance. Sometimes, we are called to "get up and do." And sometimes, we are invited to "sit and listen." ‡

Sometimes, we are called to "get up and do." And sometimes, we are invited to "sit and listen."

Source: Adapted from *Liguori Catholic Bible Study—The Gospel of Luke: Salvation for All Humanity*, by William A. Anderson, DMin, PhD © 2012 (821226, Liguori Publications).

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Cremation: A Pastoral Guide for Today's Catholics" by Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSSR

It is a privileged experience to remember our loved ones with prayer, to celebrate the lives of those who have gone before us, and to consider how we want to be remembered and celebrated when we die. Millions of humans are discarded, disposed of, covered over. Their deaths, as real as our own and that of our loved ones, are not acknowledged; their lives are not memorialized in any way. Sometimes, this is due to poverty or war, natural disaster, or the ravages of pestilence and disease. Even as we face the discomfort of speaking about death, gratitude steadies us: we have the privilege to discern how our lives and deaths will be remembered.

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

PRAYER

God of abundance, open my eyes to the bounty around me and inspire me to live with open hands and an open heart. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

August 3–8

Monday, Weekday Jer 28:1–17 / Mt 14:22–36

Tuesday, St. John Vianney: Jer 30:1–2, 12–15, 18–22 / Mt 14:22–36 or Mt 15:1–2, 10–14

Wednesday, Weekday: Jer 31:1–7 / Mt 15:21–28

Thursday, Transfiguration of the Lord:

Dn 7:9–10, 13–14 / 2 Pt 1:16–19 / Mt 17:1–9

Friday, Weekday: Na 2:1, 3; 3:1–3, 6–7 / Mt 16:24–28

Saturday, St. Dominic: Hb 1:12–2:4 / Mt 17:14–20



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