

At that time: Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, went up on the mountain, and sat down there. Great crowds came to him, having with them the lame, the blind, the deformed, the mute, and many others. They placed them at his feet, and he cured them. The crowds were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the deformed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind able to see, and they glorified the God of Israel. Jesus summoned his disciples and said, “My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, for they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, for fear they may collapse on the way.” The disciples said to him, “Where could we ever get enough bread in this deserted place to satisfy such a crowd?” Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” “Seven”, they replied, “and a few fish.” He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over–seven baskets full.

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, I now turn confidently to you, who are my friend and savior. You are always watching over me and protecting me whether I am mindful of you or not. Thank you. I love you, and I’m grateful for these moments to refresh myself in your presence.

Petition: My Jesus, give me an unshakeable confidence in your unconditional love.

1. Jesus on the Mountain: Jesus is the focal point of history and of all human aspirations. Even when he goes to out-of-the-way places, as is the case in this Gospel passage, he is sought after. He strides by the Sea of Galilee and scales up the mountain, and all humanity seeks him out. He doesn’t interrogate them about their past or

condemn them for their sins. He simply gives to each what he or she needs: to the blind, sight; to the mute, the gift of speech; to the deaf, hearing. Imagine for a moment this poor mass of humanity around the Master. Place yourself with them. Your turn comes, and suddenly it is as if the crowd disappears and you are alone with Jesus. He looks into your eyes with loving concern and asks what you are seeking—even though he already knows it. My Jesus, it is you that I seek. Heal me, and do not let any sin separate me from you today.

2. "They Have Nothing to Eat." Love is not always very practical. Jesus' heart is moved with compassion for all those who have sought him out. He knows the sacrifices that they have made in searching him out, and he is not going to leave them disappointed. The disciples saw only the practical problem, but in his charity towards his neighbor, Jesus all but ignores it. What can I learn from Christ's attitude? Will I ever be let down or not be satisfied if I seek Christ with a sincere heart?

3. The Bread of Life: The miracle that Jesus works in multiplying the loaves is a prelude to an even greater miracle he plans to bring about. Jesus knows the longings of our hearts, and he knows that material food has its limits, even when it is abundant. St Augustine states, "You made us for yourself, Oh Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." How can I not trust that Jesus will always provide for what I truly need, after his lowering himself to appear as bread so that we can feed on him and be satisfied?

Conversation with Christ: My Jesus, I have a very wayward heart. I know that you are the only one who can fulfill the longing of my soul; yet so often I put my confidence in the fleeting things of this world instead. Reassure my heart that you will always provide for me if I put all my trust in you. Keep me going up the mountain towards your heavenly Kingdom, where you will be all in all.

Resolution: I will pause sometime during the day—perhaps before lunch—and make a spiritual communion by inviting Christ into my heart. I will thank him for the gift of himself in the blessed Eucharist and renew my confidence in him.