

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time August 1, 2021

Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life.

— John 6:27

THE BREAD OF LIFE

Today's Gospel has the crowd asking Jesus three questions. First, "When did you get here," to which Jesus responds by rebuking them for their failure to grasp his miracle as a "sign," an occasion to put faith in him. Their second question about accomplishing the "works of God" has Jesus respond that faith is the "work" that God wishes. Many scholars believe this is John's answer to the faith-works dichotomy emerging in the early Christian community. Faith is the work of God in the believer, John would have us understand. The third question asked by the crowd is a request for a "sign" that would allow them to put faith in Jesus, as the manna in the desert allowed the Israelites to put faith in the Lord God. Jesus answers by revealing himself as the "bread of life" that "comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

—J. S. Paluch Co.

FEAST OF FAITH

The Preface: Thanksgiving

The preface of the Mass has been called "a poem, the cry of joy and recognition, the song of the world discovering its salvation ... the certitude of faith making hope spring forth" (Philippe Béguerie, quoted in *The Mass*, Lucien Deiss, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1992, p. 70). The preface takes up the last words of the dialogue, and expresses briefly and simply why we are grateful, why it is right and just to give thanks and praise to God. On feast days, the preface sings of the specific mystery or saint we celebrate; in Ordinary Time, the Sunday and weekday prefaces express our gratitude for God's gift of the Son, Jesus Christ, in whom we have redemption and newness of life. The prefaces offer a succinct account of what God has done for us in Christ; they express the mystery of faith, always relating it to us, to our lives. "By his birth we are reborn," we hear in Preface IV for Sundays in Ordinary Time. "By his suffering we are freed from sin. By his rising from the dead we rise to everlasting life." Yes, we have cause to give God thanks and praise. —Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Nm 11:4b-15; Ps 81:12-17; Mt 14:13-21
 Tuesday: Nm 12:1-13; Ps 51:3-7, 12-13; Mt 14:22-36
 Wednesday: Nm 13:1-2, 25 — 14:1, 26-29a, 34-35; Ps 106:6-7ab, 13-14, 21-23; Mt 15:21-28
 Thursday: Nm 20:1-13; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9; Mt 16:13-23
 Friday: Dn 7:9-10, 13-14; Ps 97:1-2, 5-9; 2 Pt 1:16-19; Mk 9:2-10
 Saturday: Dt 6:4-13; Ps 18:2-4, 47, 51; Mt 17:14-20
 Sunday: 1 Kgs 19:4-8; Ps 34:2-9; Eph 4:30 -5:2; Jn 6:41-51

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Mon: St. Eusebius of Vercelli; St. Peter Julian Eymard
 Wed: [St. John Vianney](#)
 Thurs: Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major
 Fri: The Transfiguration of the Lord; First Friday
 Sat: St. Sixtus II and Companions;
 St. Cajetan; First Saturday



Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated! For the month of July/August offerings: PLEASE put in Mass collection box or mail to St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish, P. O. Box 339, Occidental CA 95465. Or donate at our website www.stphilipsteresa.org via Paypal or card. Please include your offering envelope # [if you have one] with your donation. Bless you!

thru-July25 summary: 1st collections: \$6298. 2nd collections: \$2010.

July 24-25: 1st collection: \$868. 2nd collection: \$1455.

8/1: Weekly Church Offering. 8/8: Operating Expenses. Peter's Pence.

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA
Finance Council [FC]: TBA
Liturgy Committee [LC]: TBA
St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044
St. Philip Ladies Guild: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

7/31 Sat. 5pm Mass for the People
 8/01 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Emily & Joe Palmer
 8/01 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Elaine Joyce
 8/06 Fri. 11am Funeral Mass/Memorial for Elaine Joyce
 @ St P church & hall
 8/07 Sat. 5pm Mass
 8/08 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Tina Bartolo
 8/08 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People

Prayer Requests: Please leave a message at 707-408-2650.

Teresa K., Pat K., Thomas T., Susan B., Lorri McC., Sarah, Clifford J., Terri A., Fred P., Theresa S., Sara, Mary Anne P., Barbara, Dave C., Jim P., William, Parson P., Dave, Mary O., Bill Z., Daniel, Sally T., Michael D., Richard M., Kathleen, Peter, Rosa S., Susan B., Joyce D., Anita C., George H., Mimi H., Steve, Barry, Lorrin K., Hugh P., Robert S., Britney N., Chuck, Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Papke family., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James G., Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N., Diane K., Janet K., Norma M., Elaine J., River M.; and for repose of the soul of Claudia Munoz's mother.

Mission San Juan Bautista





A 16th-century map of Palestine and the surrounding region. From the collection of the [National Library of Israel](#), courtesy of the Eran Laor Cartographic Collection

Deacon-structing Church Mothers: Part Six

by [Deacon Pedro](#)

Over the last five weeks, I've been taking a little bit of liberty in referring to some early women saints as "Church Mothers". You may remember that we call [Church Fathers](#) those men in the early Church who contributed to defining Church doctrine. Some of them are also considered [Doctors of the Church](#). But we don't have "Mothers of the Church". Still, the early Church had many influential women who worked with and influenced our Church Fathers and who, in their own right, greatly contributed to the practice of the Faith.

[First](#), we learned about Thecla, Irene of Macedonia, Macrina the Elder, Macrina the Younger, Nino, and Proba. [Four weeks ago](#), we learned about the daughters of St. Philip the Deacon. [Then](#) we learned about Eudokia, Blandina, Synclética, Demiana, and Margaret the Virgin. [Two weeks ago](#), we learned about Marcella, Monica, Helena, Catherine of Alexandria, and Mary of Egypt, and [last week](#), we learned about Melania the Elder and her granddaughter, Melania the younger, and about St. Paula and her daughter Eustochium.

Today I'd like to conclude our series with a woman who has been called the first pilgrim to the Holy Land.

Egeria (also written Etheria or Aetheria) was a Galician woman from Hispania (present-day Spain), who travelled to Jerusalem in the late 4th century and kept a detailed journal of her travels. She describes all the sights and her experiences, and at the end, she describes many of the liturgies that she experienced while in the Holy Land. It is the earliest account of any such travel that exists to this date.

Egeria details her travels in a letter, now called the [Itinerarium Egeriae](#) or *Peregrinatio Aetheriae*, addressed to her "sisters" at home. For this reason, some have concluded that she was a nun. However, given the fact that she was able to make such a journey during this time in history, lasting a total of three years, it is likely that she was a woman of nobility and wealth.

In the first part of her letter, Egeria describes her travels while she spent three years with Jerusalem as her home base. Among the places she writes about are Old Testament sites like Rameses, the tomb of Job, Rachel's Well, the city of Melchizedek, the Red Sea, and Mounts Sinai, Horeb, and Nebo. She also writes about some sites we would visit nowadays like the Jordan Valley, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Nazareth, and the Mount of Beatitudes. Finally, on her return home, she travelled north to Antioch and to Edessa, crossing the Euphrates into Mesopotamia and Syria before heading back to Constantinople via Tarsus.

Wherever Egeria went, she was greeted, welcomed, and accompanied by local monks, priests, and bishops as if she were a celebrity. Sometimes, depending on how dangerous her destination, she

even had a military escort. She describes each site in much detail. For example, arriving at Sinai, she says that the valley under the mountain was 16 miles in length. Most interestingly, she participates in all the proper rituals for each place, and she includes with her descriptions of each site the proper biblical reference and sometimes even some commentary or explanation.

At the site of the Burning Bush she writes:

"Now it was about the tenth hour when we had arrived at the place, and so, as it was late, we could not make the oblation, but prayer was made in the church and also at the bush in the garden, and the passage from the book of Moses was read according to custom. Then, as it was late, we took a meal with the holy men at a place in the garden before the bush; we stayed there also, and next day, rising very early, we asked the priests that the oblation should be made there, which was done."

The second part of Egeria's letter details various liturgical ceremonies and practices that she experienced while in Jerusalem. This was at a time when our liturgical practices were not yet universalized; at this time, for example, December 25th was not universally accepted as the date of the Feast of the Nativity! Still, Egeria describes in much detail the daily offices, matins, vespers, the Sunday celebrations, the Feasts of Epiphany and the Presentation, and Lent and Holy Week, as well as the season of Easter.

She writes that on Good Friday, after keeping vigil the whole night, the Passion was read, then everyone went to pray at the column where they believed the Lord was scourged. This is followed by a veneration of the Cross. The deacons stood on guard because, "the custom is that the people, both faithful and catechumens, come one by one and, bowing down at the table, kiss the sacred wood and pass through. And because, I know not when, someone is said to have bitten off and stolen a portion of the sacred wood, it is thus guarded by the deacons who stand around, lest anyone approaching should venture to do so again."

After describing the Easter time celebrations, concluding with Pentecost, she goes on to describe the preparation of the catechumens for baptism.

She often makes reference to how things were done at home or "as is the custom" in other places. For example, she details that just as at home they keep forty days (*Quadragesima*) before Easter, in Jerusalem they keep eight weeks, explaining that there is never fasting on any "Sabbath" throughout the year, fasting being eating only once a day.

On her return back to Spain, Egeria stopped in present-day Turkey to visit the Shrine of [St. Thecla](#), to whom it's clear she had a devotion. She writes:

Parish Memo... Per Bishop Vasa: Covid Update: "...the spread and danger of the COVID variants are increasing each week. I think it would be prudent to encourage people to wear masks to help minimize the risk of infection for both the vaccinated and the unvaccinated.... it is a good idea for anyone distributing Holy Communion to wear a mask when exercising this ministry...Please continue to pay attention to the County Health Officers...who continue to have authority over these matters. Clearly, we are not yet entirely free of this threat. Persevere."

"When I had arrived in the Name of God, prayer was made at the memorial, and the whole of the acts of saint Thecla having been read, I gave endless thanks to Christ our God, who deigned to fulfill my desires in all things, unworthy and undeserving as I am. Then, after a stay of two days, when I had seen the holy monks and

apotactitae *who were there, both men and women, and when I had prayed and made my communion, I returned to Tarsus and to my journey.*" After this, she writes of her express desire to travel to Ephesus "because of the memorial of the holy and blessed Apostle John".

This is where her diary ends. Towards the end she makes reference to feeling tired, perhaps sick, but not eager to return to Spain. It is not clear how or when she died or whether she was able to return to Galicia. I like to

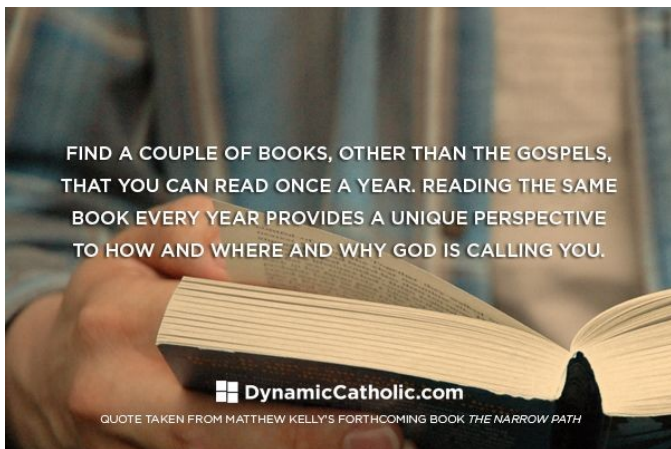
imagine that perhaps Egeria, as she made her way home, came across Melania the Younger or her grandmother – perhaps she met St. Paula and Eustochium in Bethlehem. Maybe she met St. Marcella, and together they rejoiced at the wonderful opportunities our Lord had given them to participate in spreading the Good News.

We have one of the earliest accounts of the liturgy thanks to one of our Greek Fathers, [St. Justin Martyr](#), who wrote about it around AD 155 in his *First Apology*. It is amazing to see how the essence of the Mass has not changed much since. Reading Egeria's diary also connects us to those early Christian practices and makes us realize that when we visit holy sites and when we participate in liturgy, we are closer to our early Christian Fathers and Mothers than we think.

If you liked learning about these great early Church women, you may want to also look up St. Pelagia, St. Domnina of Syria, and St. Mary of Edessa.



Every week, Deacon Pedro takes a particular topic apart, not so much to explore or explain the subject to its fullness, but rather to provide insights that will deepen our understanding of the subject. Contact: pedro@saltandlighttv.org.



Take and Eat

We could say that each of us started out at birth with only five loaves and two fishes. What I mean is that our capacity for what we call food for thought seemed quite limited back then – our mother's milk was sufficient to keep us alive – but our capacity for knowing things, for understanding, wisdom, a deeper sense of the world into which we were born – was untested. There was so much we were as yet unaware of.

But as time went on we began to assimilate things – at least notice things if not think about them. The "buffet" of objects presented to us day after day was enough to satisfy our appetite.

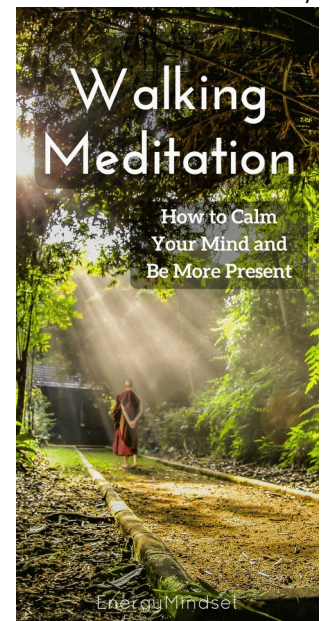
Elementary school widened the table – we learned language, how to talk, add, subtract, picked up on this thing called time – especially the past and perhaps little of the present. And so it went. New stages of education to be digested until we began to be choosey, have opinions or at least be led from one opinion to another.

But all that was about everyday realities. We were also introduced to "realities" that somehow resided beyond our neighborhood – realities such as God, a hereafter, a destiny that might be ok or not ok . . . angels, souls, good and evil (which Genesis warned us not to monkey with). And so our capacity, our appetite for learning things advanced – except that the demands of everyday survival turned our minds into learning not so much *to know things* as *how to do things*. We left a purely educational atmosphere in order to go to work – to buy the actual food we had to eat.

And then? How many of us rarely open a book again to dine upon its contents – to taste its fare, backing off if it is in anyway too different to the tastes we are used to. I mean how many of us stop thinking about why we are here, why are we on this planet, where do we go from here – how did this all come about, who or what am I other than what my name tag says? Philosophy? Forget it! Theology? Forget it! McDonald's is my preference; fast food only.

And yet our awareness of the storehouses of scholarship, of science, and especially of literature – sacred and secular – has grown – inviting us to consume so much more than the five loaves and two fishes we started out with. If we are fortunate we may experience at some point in our lives (and I'm talking about blue collar workers and not just academic highbrows) what our biblical Job underwent – in all his know-it-all petulance. He was caught short by his Creator with questions like:

Have you ever thought about where this earth comes from; do you know anything about the size of the universe; how deep is the sea; where does the dawn come from – other than scientifically speaking; aside from dawn to dusk what do you mean by light and darkness; what is a sacrament; why do you come to Mass; what do you hope for; why! do you hope; why do you love; why is there not nothing?



<http://energymindset.com/>

Five loaves and two fishes to begin with – a banquet is laid out before you ever since – inexhaustible since there will always be twelve baskets full of fragments left over. If you have foregone thinking, meditating, reading – reawaken your hunger; take and eat.

-Geoff Wood, 7/25/21

