

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Opening prayers · Ordinary Time 16, Year B²

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year B

Proper 11

Sunday between 17 and 23 July inclusive ·
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Principal Service readings

Jeremiah 23.1-6	The remnant of the flock and the shepherd to come
Psalms 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Ephesians 2.11-22	Reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles and with God
Mark 6.30-34, 53-56	Jesus taught the crowds; and healed the sick

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus teaches the crowds; and heals the sick

The apostles returned from their mission. ³⁰They gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Mark 6.30-34, 53-56 NRSV¹

CPL • LBC Year B Proper 11.odt • 2023-01-27

² *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Comments and Questions

Missing out of the reading from Mark is the story of the feeding of the five thousand, the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four gospels (Mark 6.32-44; Matthew 14.13-21; Luke 9.10b-17; and John 6.1-15). This week we shall consider the setting. Jesus has sent out the apostles and they have returned, followed no doubt by would-be disciples. The response of Jesus is to seek a place of quiet, away from the demands of the crowd. He and the apostles get into a boat and find a deserted place, but the crowds are not easily shaken off, and continue to come to him. Jesus responds now, perhaps surprisingly, with compassion (6.34). His initial response is not to feed them but to teach them (metaphorical food – see Proverbs 9.5; Ecclesiasticus 15.3; 24.19). Is Mark expecting his readers to realise that the teaching of Jesus is as important to life and sustenance as bread in the wilderness?

After the miracle of the loaves, Jesus and the apostles go by boat to Gennesaret, not a town but the heavily populated plain between Tiberias and Capernaum, where Jesus continued his healing work (6.56). Jesus is shown to be not a rural itinerant preacher, but someone who attracted the crowds and made an impact wherever people gathered. The passage is full of actions and movements.

The fringe (*kraspedon*) of Jesus' cloak (6.56) might indicate the tassels that Jewish males were to have hanging from the four corners of their garments (Numbers 15.38; Deuteronomy 22.12).

Quotations

1

Jesus was God spelling himself out in language humanity could understand.

S. D. Gordon, 1859–1936

2

As many have learned and later taught, you don't realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.

Tim Keller, 1950–

3

When God becomes a Man and lives as a creature among his own creatures in Palestine, then indeed his life is one of supreme self-sacrifice and leads to Calvary.

C. S. Lewis, 1898–1963

4

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

Out of solitude: three meditations on the Christian life / Henri Nouwen. 1974

Related topics

For further study:

Prayer–action–contemplation; evangelisation; reign of God; Jesus, the Good Shepherd; healing and exorcism; eucharist; liturgy of the Word; ministry; call of baptism

Closing Prayer

Compassionate God,
from far and near you gather your Church into one.

Safeguard the unity of your flock
through the teaching of Christ the Shepherd,
that all your scattered children may find in him
the guidance and nourishment they seek.