

Laetare
30 March 2025
John 6:1-15

Trust Me

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—Amen

The text for this morning's sermon is the Holy Gospel appointed for today from the Holy Gospel According to St. John, the sixth chapter.

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit—Amen

“Trust me.” Those are words one usually hears just before being taken for a ride by a charlatan of some sort—a used car salesman, a politician in an election year, an eighteen-year-old boy in the back seat of a car. “Trust me” is usually what people say just before they prove to you that you shouldn't have. And it's even worse when phrased as a question: “Don't you trust me?”

Now, Jesus has been traveling around Galilee and Judea performing all sorts of miraculous signs. He has shown that He is Lord of the creation wielding power over it. And He has proven Himself to be gracious and merciful—and unlike us—trustworthy. As our text opens, crowds of people who have seen or heard about Jesus' miraculous signs are gathering. In response to the gathering crowd Jesus asks Philip, “Do you trust me?” Except He phrases it, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” St. John is quick to mention that Jesus “said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.” Now, it might seem unfair for Jesus to ask Philip this question all the while knowing what He would do. But Jesus asks Philip this question in order to see whether Philip would trust Him.

Philip's faith is tested in order to see whether or not Philip trusts that Jesus knows best what to do in this situation and whether Philip trusts that Jesus will do what is best. Will Philip

say, “Give us this day our daily bread?” Will Philip hope and expect and trust that Jesus can and will be generous? Does Philip believe that Jesus wants to feed the crowd? Philip fails our Lord’s test with his answer, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little” (v 7). Unlike the Canaanite woman from our Gospel Lesson two weeks ago, Philip does not grab hold of what he has seen and heard before. He trusts in his own reason and senses. He forgets that Jesus will provide everything to support this body and life. Philip falls back on his own self and his fellow disciples, wondering if they could pool all their resources, especially money, in order to feed the multitude.

Sometimes, we are tested in a similar way to Philip. We come into want or all sorts of other adversities. We feel distress and helplessness in many ways. Perhaps it is the death of a spouse or a family member. Perhaps it is the diagnosis of a terrifying disease. Perhaps it is losing a job or finding yourself underemployed. God does not allow these things to happen in order to bring evil upon you or to cause you to sin. He knows the way out. And He wants you to see and know the way out of distress.

“Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.” Philip’s answer is not only the wrong answer, it doesn’t even answer Jesus’ question. You would think Philip would recall the many signs and wonders Jesus performed and the marvelous sermons Jesus had preached. Philip’s answer should be, “Lord, you are the Giver of every good and perfect gift. You satisfy everything with life and pleasure. You will also help here.” Instead, Philip falls back on his reason and all his senses. He goes right to the heart of the matter as he sees it: the lack of money to buy food and drink. See what little faith Philip has here. Andrew fails the test, too, when he says about the five loaves of bread and two fish, “what are they for so

many?” For Andrew, faith becomes the work of a mathematician who cannot solve a problem even when he knows the answer.

Jesus answers Philip’s and Andrew’s questions. “Have the people sit down,” He says. From His Word follows deed. Jesus took the meager resources that were available, five loaves of bread and two fish, thanked God, broke the bread and gave both bread and fish to His disciples, and they handed it out among the people. While He did this, the bread and the fish multiplied in the Hands of the Lord, so that they all ate and were satisfied, about five thousand men, not counting the women and children. This is the mighty and unambiguous answer to the question the Lord asked Philip.

The Lord’s giving is not paltry or measly. It is generous, considerable, substantial, ample and more than enough. For the Lord Jesus wants them to have as much as they want, and to eat their fill and be well fed. And so His giving, His feeding, His mercy is more than they imagined, more than they hoped for.

As it was for them, so it is for us—and then even more. Daily, we pray Our Father to give us His daily bread. And He does so. Why? Not because we pray, but because He is merciful—because He is pleased to give us all we need to support our body and life. For the Lord’s mercy is a mercy He loves to give out, a mercy He wants us to want, a mercy we are faithfully and joyfully to expect from Him.

Jesus is our Chief Steward. He gives you as He wills. How much He gives you is also according to His good and gracious will. He provided ravens to bring Elijah bread and meat twice a day. The Psalmist writes “I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread” (Psalm 37:25). And our Lord says “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”

(Matthew 6:33). And He keeps His promise. Jesus provides for you in ways like this miracle year after year.

The Lord's goodness is not an occasion for you to seek only earthly good from Jesus, like those in our text who wanted to make Christ their bread king. We who live in Christ also receive more than food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, and everything we need. To those who live in Christ, who hope in His mercy, who rely on Him and call upon Him in every need—to us, our Lord also gives us the Holy Communion, the food of our salvation.

Our Lord Jesus is pleased to give us His own flesh to eat and His own blood to drink. He Himself says so a little later in John chapter 6: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me." (John 6:51, 53-57). Life, abundant life, forever life, devil-free life, true and genuine life—that is the mercy our Lord gives in the bread which is His Body and the wine which is His Blood.

And that is the most and the fullest and the best of the Lord's mercy. For in His flesh and blood is concentrated all that our Lord is pleased to give. All His kindnesses, whatever He gives, everything you get from the Lord—it all depends on and comes from this mercy which our Lord locates within His very self. So the Lord Jesus lays down His life in death to meet every need we present to Him. And then He says, "Here is My Body given for you; My Blood shed for you, in

answer to every prayer and to fulfill everything you expect from Me.” In His flesh and in His blood, our Lord feeds us body and soul, and unites Himself and His saving help to our very flesh and blood.

Jesus is your inexhaustible source of all earthly blessings, and all heavenly blessings too. This is God’s kingdom coming to you. The Holy Spirit carries the redeeming Word of Christ through preaching and the Sacraments. Hearing the Word and gladly keeping it is letting God’s kingdom come. And as God’s kingdom comes to you, His will is done also among you. His will for you is to let Him provide everything you need to support your body and life. His will for you is summed up in two simple words: “Trust Me.” All is well with you when you allow the Lord to take care of your needs, especially your need for salvation.

When Jesus says, “Trust Me,” it is far different than when anyone else says it. When Jesus says, “Trust Me,” you can rest secure in His Word. And His Word is this: “I forgive you all your sins.”

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit—Amen

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus—
Amen