

Jesus' Sensitivity

This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Isaiah 55:1-3 - Invitation to grace
- ▶ Romans 8:35, 37-39 - Indomitable love of Christ
- ▶ Matthew 14:13-21 - Jesus feeds five thousand

Poor Jesus can hardly get a break for some time to himself. When he hears that Herod beheaded his good friend and relative John the Baptist, Jesus tries to get away for awhile by heading off in a boat to a deserted place. He steps back onto land only to discover that the crowds have followed him. Jesus could easily be impatient and short with them in his sadness and grief, but instead, his instinctive response was to be moved with compassion for them.

After he cures the sick, his next compassionate response is to keep them safe and feed them, rather than sending them off in the dark from a deserted place. Jesus knew that many, probably most, of the people who flocked to him were poor people, and this crowd would have been no different. Although the disciples suggest he send them away to “buy food for themselves,” Jesus knows many of them wouldn’t have spare change for food. His sensitivity to their situation sparks more compassion, and he feeds them until they are all satisfied.

Early followers of Jesus would have connected that miraculous feeding with the passage from Isaiah in the first reading today. “All you who are thirsty, come



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“Come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost.”

Sheepish Question:
Wow—and why such measly gratitude?

to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; come, without paying and without cost (Isa 55:2). In this case, the crowd eagerly accepts Jesus and his teaching, unlike sometimes when Pharisees or other religious leaders argue and try to pick fights with Jesus. The crowd here mirrors those in the Isaiah passage. They come to Jesus, they listen to him, and they heed him. In return, they are well-fed, and they receive life (Isa 55:3).

Questions of the Week

- 1 Jesus experienced all the human emotions we experience. What do you imagine he was thinking and feeling when he heard John was killed?
- 2 Have you ever witnessed or heard of someone able to respond with compassion to others even in a time of their own grief? Please share.

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