

Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation - King's Lynn

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REFLECTION

REJOICE! PASSIONTIDE IS COMING

In the gospel for Laetare Sunday the feeding of the five thousand gives us good reason to rejoice, even as Passiontide approaches. Next Sunday is Passion Sunday, the start of the most intense period of the Church's year. We should now take stock of our Lenten efforts so far, and if necessary renew our resolutions, in preparation for Passiontide and Holy Week.

In the feeding of the five thousand our Lord anticipated the still more miraculous feeding of His people which He was later to accomplish, first at the Last Supper, and then down the ages every time that the sacrifice of the altar is offered. What Christ did for the five thousand He does still more wonderfully every time the Eucharistic banquet is laid before us, day by day, century by century.

In the feeding of the five thousand He gave His people earthly food to sustain the body. In the Blessed Sacrament He feeds us with Himself, spiritual nourishment for the soul, supernatural food from heaven, containing within itself all sweetness. This is how God affirms us and accepts us. He asks us to eat Him.

If we are in a state of grace and have a clear conscience, then we are permitted to receive Christ's Real Presence in Holy Communion. In those precious nuptial moments His life and ours intermingle. We are embraced in our soul by the one Person Whose affirmation of us matters more than all others, Whose acceptance of us counts for more than anything else.

This is mercy; that He really does take us seriously, in spite of our feebleness; that He really does take pleasure in our company, in spite of our inconsistencies.

The Master's sacramental love both affirms us and at the same time helps us to forget



ourselves. By forgetting ourselves we find the freedom we need to live as disciples of the Nazarene.

Discipleship includes accompanying the Servant-King up to Jerusalem, and His Passion. There in the holy city He will submit Himself to betrayal, torture, and an agonizing sacrificial death.

Before that, He will first put in place the greatest of all His miracles; the abiding Eucharistic miracle by which He repeatedly feeds His disciples, day by day, year by year, unto eternal life.