

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost August 2, 2026

Prayer of the Day

Glorious God, your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist,] he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Sermon:

A dozen travellers packed into a tiny house in North Dakota late one bitter cold December night munching cookies and sipping cocoa and coffee as one of the hosts, my grandfather, engaged these young adults asking about their lives and telling stories of his own. He was in his glory. As was my grandmother. Never mind that her grandson impulsively invited a van load of students he was travelling with for

a very impromptu visit as they made their way across the prairies to Montana for Christmas break.

When a baker's dozen appeared at her doorstep unannounced—late a night— grandma just beamed, beckoned us, quickly got everybody seated and had the kettle boiling in what felt like one deft motion. In true grandma Cassezza form, she nipped down to the dugout basement to her magic freezer and re-emerged bearing several dozen cookies; always on hand just in case.

In true Grandma Cassezza form, she showed loving care by feeding her family, the students and monks she cooked for at the Abbey, and even a very unexpected group of kids heading home for Christmas. That's just how my grandma rolled.

She was devout so maybe she liked that Jesus rolled the same way. If people are hungry and who cares about a silly guest list! People are hungry so you feed them with what's on hand—even when at first glance it doesn't look like much. Matthew's story about the feeding of crowds reminds us God does a lot with a little—The story is about even more than that.

Jesus has heard about the sort of feeding that Herod and his cronies were up to....Dinner parties to impress, impulsive muscle flexing and impetuous promises eventuating in the decapitation of a troublesome prophet. Herod was just a turn coat puppet serving an empire whose bread and circuses slogan was about feeding people just enough to keep them from starving or rioting. Food becomes a form of control.

Food becomes weaponized when one country goes to war with another. Starving people out is considered a reliable tactic for getting what you want. Consider the words from US President Richard Nixon's Agriculture Secretary Earl Butts; "Food is a weapon".

For Jesus, food is love. Food is life. Food keeps starving prophets and widows alive. Food fuels Israel's long march to freedom. Food connotes God's daily loving care—that the emperor Domitian would claim that fish jump into Roman nets to serve the empire's good pleasure blasphemes God's generosity and goodness to everyone.

Jesus takes bread, thanks God, breaks it and gives it freely because people are hungry and he is compassionate. May we hold fast to that vivid image as we pray “give us this day our daily bread”. May we remember deeply as we share bread and wine—Jesus literal gift of himself to us. May the church learn to be companions, or bread share-ers for any and all who hunger.