

## BIBLICAL RESOURCES



Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15; Psalm 78 (77); Ephesians 4:17, 20-24; John 6:24-35

## This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent

John 6:22 *The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. 23 Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24* So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." 30 So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?" 31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

### INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

There is a problem with the lectionary at

[www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie)

this point because the Gospel passages are not well selected. The divisions ought to be 6:22-30 followed by 6:31-48. The lectionary excerpt overlaps the sections (6:24-35) somewhat. For clarity, I have added above the necessary introductory verses.

A search is going on, a not quite disinterested, open search but a search nonetheless. My own quest for meaning, often mixed up with "food that perishes", should provide plenty of material for reflection. The occasional moment of real lucidity might be noticed: what must we do to perform the works of God? The real challenge of Christian faith is the figure of Jesus himself. Bishop John Robinson's phrase comes to mind: "the scandalous particularity of the incarnation." Somehow today we have to negotiate a recognition of the real diversity of faiths, while keeping before our eyes the person of Jesus, the unique and irreducible heart of the Christian faith.

### KIND OF WRITING

This is a dramatic scene, which presents a kind of rabbinic argument about the identity of Jesus. As often in the Fourth Gospel, the dialogue partners seem to be talking at cross purposes, with layers of misunderstanding, intended really to instruct the reader. In reality what we have here is not a report of a conversation held by the historical Jesus but rather a historicising reading back of the kind of argument the Johannine church was having with the synagogue. It therefore gives us a window on late first-century religious disputes.

### OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

The story of manna (recounted in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11) should be read carefully in conjunction with this text.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and

### Thought for the day

Physical hunger is unmistakable and urgent. The deeper hungers of the heart are also urgent but can take a while to recognise. Deep down, for what do I really hunger and thirst?

### Prayer

You alone can satisfy the hungry heart, Lord God, and may we make make our the words of the Gospel, "Sir, give us this bread always." Through Christ our Lord.

gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. (Exod 16:4)

Yet he commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; he rained down on them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven. Mortals ate of the bread of angels; he sent them food in abundance. (Ps 78:23-25)

### NEW TESTAMENT FOREGROUND

The *theological* centre of John 6 is found here: Jesus answered them, "*This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.*" (John 6:29) There is a Eucharistic "layer" to chapter 6, of course, but the more important layer is Christological. This can be shown by looking at the following selected verses, which underline the person of Jesus and the reactions of believers to him.

John 6:2 A large crowd kept *following him*, 3 *Jesus* went up the mountain. 14 "*This is indeed the prophet.*" 15 (They) were about to take him by force to make him *king*. 20 But he said to them, "*It is I*; do not be afraid." 24 (They) went to Capernaum *looking for Jesus*. 26 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, *you are looking for me*, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27 (Work for) the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. *For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.*" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, *that you believe in him whom he has sent.*" 35 Jesus said to them, "*I am the bread of life. Whoever comes*

Sequence	John	Mark
Multiplication (5000)	6:1-15	6:30-34
Walking on the water	6:16-24	6:45-54
Skip to what follows in Mark after the second multiplication (4000)		
Request for sign	6:25-34	8:11-13
Remarks on the bread	6:35-59	8:14-21
Faith of Peter	6:60-69	8:27-30
Passion theme/ betrayal	6:70-71	8:31-33

to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 40 This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.” 42 They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph?” 44 No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. (T)he bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” 57 Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. 62 Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 65 And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.” 67 So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

ST PAUL

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. (1 Cor 10:1-5)

BRIEF COMMENTARY

**Verse 22** The mysterious “whereabouts” of Jesus lead to a search for Jesus, who has become somehow detached from his disciples.

**Verse 23** This reminds us of the multiplication, with its hints of Moses. Just who is this Jesus becomes the topic of the present “dispute.”

**Verse 24** “Looking for Jesus” is a thematic feature of this Gospel from the

start (1:38-39) to the finish (20:15). However, not all searches are open-ended and sincere and some fail.

**Verse 25** The origins of Jesus constitute also a thematic feature of this Gospel. The final expression of this is on the lips of no less a figure than Pilate: *He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.* (John 19:9)

**Verse 26** The motivation of those looking for Jesus is questioned.

**Verse 27** The first part of this verse ought to be read in conjunction with John 4:31-34. The “food” of Jesus, his source of nourishment and inner life, is doing the will of the one who sent him, a task accomplished, perfected, on the cross. Jesus then offers us this same “food” of obedience, that is, this loving relationship. The later imagery of giving his flesh brings together the imagery of food and cross: it is there that he metaphorically gives us himself for our nourishment. The second part of this verse gives rise to the question that follows.

**Verse 28** This is one of few totally open questions in this Gospel and it leads to a similarly totally clear response.

**Verse 29** Surely the theological centre of John 6, as noted above. It may even be the heart of this Gospel as a whole.

**Verse 30** This reflects the kind of discussion held with experts from the synagogue.

**Verse 31** The partners in dialogue quote Exodus 16:4 and Psalm 78:23-25 (see above). This verse forms the basis of the discussion that follows.

**Verse 32** Of course, there would be no objection to identifying God as the one who provided the manna. The real problem is the identification of God with “my father.”

**Verse 33** Jesus is the bread from heaven and he gives life to the world through the Cross and Resurrection.

**Verse 34** A natural and spontaneous response. However, the similarity to the naïve response of the woman of Samaria (*the woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”* John 4:15) thus alerts the reader that there is a lot more to this desire than meets the eye. Physical drinking or eating is beside the point.

**Verse 35** A first and important affirmation. It belongs to the great I AM sentences of this Gospel, echoing the name of God in Exodus 3:14, I AM WHO I AM. Notice the pairings hunger / thirst, come / believe. The important level is faith in Jesus himself.

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Jesus distinguishes between food that gives quick satisfaction and food that gives lasting nourishment. It is a mark of wisdom to be able to say ‘no’ to enticing but delusory attractions in order to choose things of lasting value. From your life experience what advice would you give to another about where things of lasting value are to be found?

2. Jesus reminds his listeners that God is the source of all good things. What difference does it make in your life when you are aware that life, the world, everything you have is gift, and you live in a spirit of gratitude?

3. The work of God is that we believe in the one whom God has sent. In what ways has your faith in Jesus enriched and changed your life? How has Jesus satisfied your hungers or quenched your thirsts? Is it the idea that we are loved by God?

4. As Jesus came down from heaven to give life to the world, so each one of us is here to be a source of life to others. Think of people who have been a source of life to you, and give thanks for them. For whom have you also been a source of life?

PRAYER

Lord, giver of lasting life, satisfy our hunger through Christ, the Bread of Life, and quench our thirst with your gift of belief that we may longer work for food that perishes, but believe in the One whom you have sent.

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

# Clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in Christ

Eph 4:17 Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. 18 *They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.* 19 *They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.* 20 That is not the way you learned Christ! 21 For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. 22 You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

The force of the writing comes from the detailed contrast between vv.18-19 (omitted in the lectionary here restored) and vv. 21-23.

## CONTEXT IN THE COMMUNITY

The general setting is the conviction that conversion must lead to moral transformation. The saints, the elect are here reminded of the appropriate lifestyle.

## KIND OF WRITING

There are good arguments for seeing the line of thought as follows (move obvious in Greek):

4:17-32 *Therefore*, walk not as Gentiles  
5:1-6 *Therefore*, walk in love  
5:7-14 *Therefore*, walk as children of light  
5:15-21 *Therefore*, walk worthy of your calling.

The whole section 4:17-5:21 illustrates the “Two Ways” instruction familiar from the Bible, early Christianity, Qumran and from Mediterranean culture in general. A comparable passage may be found Deuteronomy and in the *Didache* (see below). Psalm 1 is a good example.

### *The Two Ways*

1. Sharp contrasts: 4:22-24; 5:8, 15
2. Lists of vices and virtues: 4:25-32; 5:1-4, 17-20
3. Endtime warning: 5:5-6

## RELATED PASSAGES

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. (Deuteronomy 30:15–20)

You shall hate all hypocrisy and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord. You must not forsake the Lord’s commandments but must guard what you have received, neither adding nor subtracting anything. In church you shall confess your transgressions, and you shall not approach your prayer with an evil conscience. *This is the way of life.*

*But the way of death is this:* first of all, it is evil and completely cursed; murders, adulteries, lusts, sexual immoralities, thefts, idolatries, magic arts, sorceries, robberies, false testimonies, hypocrisies, duplicity, deceit, pride, malice, stubbornness, greed, abusive language, jealousy, audacity, arrogance, boastfulness. (Didache 4:12–5:1)

## BRIEF COMMENTARY

**Verse 17** Lit. “I affirm and I bear witness”. Note that the teaching is offered “in the Lord,” i.e. with his authority. Vv. 17-19 are devoted to what *not to do*. Cf. 1 Pet 1:18. The advice is rather generalised, unlike the uncontested letters in

which Paul deals with specific issue in detail. “Futility of mind” was a common Jewish critique of the Gentile way of life.

**Verse 18** Compare material from Paul himself in Rom 1:21 (cf. Wis 13:1).

**Verse 19** In effect, alienation from God is the root of failed morality. Cf. Rom 1:24 and 1 Pet 4:3-4. The descriptions are vivid.

**Verse 20** Vv. 20-21 are also devoted to what *not to do*. V. 20 establishes the contrast very directly. Here we “learn” from Jesus as Jews learned from the Torah.

**Verse 21** Notice how firmly the “message” is rooted in a person, Jesus. A whole new way of being has been learned in (= through) him.

**Verse 22** Vv. 22-24 are devoted to what *to do*. V. 22 uses the language of moral transformation, the working out of conversion in actual lived reality. “Putting off the old self” is not simply religious vocabulary — it was also used in philosophy at the time. Cf. mindfulness today.

**Verse 23** This is the second positive instruction. Cf. Rom 12:1-2 and Col 3:10. NB the warning in Matthew 12:43-45: something must replace what has been taken out or off.

**Verse 24** In the culture, clothing represents the inner person. Cf. Polonius’s “For the apparel oft proclaims the man” (Hamlet Act 1, scene 3). The image suggests taking of the soiled clothing putting on new, clean garments. As Jesus is himself the truth (v. 21) this new self or new image and likeness has been created in him.

## POINTERS FOR PRAYER

**1.** There is no missing the meaning in this passage and it leads to a plain question: am I living the continual conversion, the total transformation of the inner and outer person which being a Christian entails?

**2.** To stay with the clothing imagery, the new “me” is already created in Christ and “ready to wear”, if only I choose.

## PRAYER

All-holy God, how wonderful the work of your hands! You restored the beauty of your image when sin had scarred the world. Grant that we may be strengthened in our inner being with power through your Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. Amen.



# It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat

Ex. 16: 1 The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. 2 The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.

12 "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

13 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

The story of the manna in the desert was in the minds of all four evangelists when writing up the miraculous multiplication. In our case, the links are evident because of the direct reference to Moses and the Mosaic traditions. All of Exodus 16 is devoted to the manna and quails, and some of the fuller text has been added in italics. It would a good idea to read all of chapter 16, although the telling is slightly jumbled as a comparison with Numbers 11 makes evident.

## ORIGIN OF THE READING

The book of Exodus is central to the Pentateuch: the book of Genesis leads up to it and the following books are a

response to the exodus itself. The book has the following outline:

1: 1–15: 21: The Exodus  
15: 22–18: 27: *Israel's journey to Sinai*  
19: 1–24: 11: YHWH's covenant  
24: 12–31: 18: Decalogue and Tabernacle  
32: 1–34: 35: The golden calf  
35: 1–40: 38: The Tabernacle and YHWH's glory

Our passage comes from that section narrating the journey through the desert to Mount Sinai. The book of Exodus shows evidence of sources. The incident of manna and quails in Exod 16 is matched symmetrically in Num 11:4-35 where it is located at Kibroth-hattaavah, its original location according to the reminiscence in Deut 9:22. In Exodus, there is a large Priestly Source insertion which takes us from 15:22 to 19:2.

## KIND OF WRITING

It is a test in the form of a plot of action, a narrative with the usual features of exposition (vv.1-2), inciting moment (3), complication (4-26), turning point (27-29), dénouement (30) and an appendix (31-36).

## OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

An shorter version is found in Numbers 11:1-9 (too long to cite in full).

*The bread of angels / panis angelicus?*  
Mortals ate of the *bread of angels*; he sent them food in abundance. (Psalms 78:25)  
Instead of these things you gave your people *food of angels*, and without their toil you supplied them from heaven with bread ready to eat, providing every pleasure and suited to every taste. (Wisdom 16:20) I pitied your groanings and gave you manna for food; you ate the *bread of angels*. (2Esdras 1:19)

By the time of Philo of Alexandria (25 BC to AD 50), the manna was understood to symbolise the gift of the Torah.

## BRIEF COMMENTARY

**Verse 2** In the counting of the book, it is a month after the exodus and the Israelites have left the oasis of Elim. It is the seventh stop and this is the third complaint. The numbers are symbolic.

**Verse 3** In a combination of idealisation of life in Egypt, irony and wit, the

people wished they had died (!) in Egypt rather than come to this place. Cf. Ex 14:1-11 and Num 11:5; 20:3-5.

**Verse 4** The complaining was real but it implied rebellion, so God devises a solution which functions also as a test. See vv. 19-20, 25-29 above. For testing, cf. Ex 15:25-26 and Deut 8:16.

**Verse 12** I.e., the Israelites are being taught the same lesson as Pharaoh. Cf. Ex 7:3-5 and 10:1-2 above. The twilight is reminiscent of Passover in Ex 12:6.

**Verse 13** The quail story is not meant to be miraculous but rather the providential arrival of migratory birds. Unlike the manna, the phenomenon of the quail does not continue. Perhaps this is just as well in the light of Num 11:18-23!?!

**Verse 14** The account combines a natural phenomenon with miraculous features. The edible honeydew is found in parts of the Sinai in June and July (called in Arabic, *manna*). However the 6-day cycle lasting all year round is unnatural.

**Verse 15** The question "What is it?" comes out in Hebrew as *mān hū'* thus offering a popular etymology of the word manna. The explanatory sentence forms the background to the homily in John 6.

## POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The desert is a place of purification and discernment. It can be a metaphor for times in my own life and in the life of the believing community. Have I been "in the desert" myself and how did I live the experience?

2. It is easy to name the physical hungers, but the hungers of the heart often go undetected. On your faith journey, when have you been aware of your need of God and what has happened as a result?

3. It is almost impossible to hear the last line without thinking of the Eucharist, our bread from heaven. It is truly a gift and satisfies us in different at the various staging posts of life. What does the Eucharist mean to you now?

## PRAYER

God of all our journeys, you are with us always, in all places. When we long for the past, help us live in the present. When we hunger for other things, satisfy us with the one thing necessary, that we may know you alone are indeed the Lord. Amen.

# THE LITURGY

## Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15; Psalm 78 (77); Ephesians 4:17, 20-24; John 6:24-35

### READINGS 1 AND 3

The reading is an ideal preparation for the Gospel of the multiplication. It reminds us of what the author of the Fourth Gospel had in mind when he was editing and adjusting the cycle of stories found in John 6.

### THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 78 (77) tells the story of the exodus, including the account of the manna, so the Psalm fits perfectly to the reading. The response makes this very clear: *The Lord gave them bread from heaven.*

### SUNDAY INTRODUCTIONS

#### First reading

*Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15*

The story of the manna—a very human story with miraculous features—is part of the background to today's Gospel. The key line is really in the very last sentence.

#### Second reading

*Ephesians 4:17, 20-24*

What difference does it make to be believer in God and a disciple of Christ? Today's reading—short and direct—may help us focus.

#### Gospel

*John 6:24-35*

The very centre of this Gospel puts it up to us today: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." (John 6:29)

### WEEKDAY INTRODUCTIONS

#### Monday 6 August

*The Transfiguration of the Lord*

*Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14*

Our reading takes us to the heavenly court. It uses a key phrase: one like a son of man, used by Jesus about himself. The ending of the reading is very like the ending of Matthew's Gospel: *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.* (Matthew 28:18)

*2 Peter 1:16-19*

Is the Christian proclamation just stories

or "clever myths"? Emphatically not, according to this reading. Jesus was a real historical person about whom believers hold well-grounded beliefs. The last sentence in the reading is very uplifting: *take [prophecy] as a lamp for lighting a way through the dark until the dawn comes and the morning star rises in your minds.*

*Mark 9:2-10*

What kind of experience was the Transfiguration for Jesus and for those present? It Mark's version it was a spiritual experience in which the true identity of Jesus was disclosed and the right responses to him indicated: *Listen, to him.* This echoes again our human condition: *we are hearers of the Word*, as Rahner put it.

#### Tuesday 7 August

*St John Vianney, priest*

*Jeremiah 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22*

A double message marks this passage from Jeremiah, weal and woe or rather the other way around, woe and weal! Yes, the disaster of the Exile brought about tremendous destruction. No, God's love has never been taken away.

*Matthew 14:22-36*

The Gospels as a whole were written in the light of Easter and to proclaim the resurrection. This is true of the walking on the water. In this case, we are to understand that the risen, living Lord is with his church always, no matter what storms and tempests we face.

#### Wednesday 8 August

*St Dominic, priest and religious*

*Jeremiah 31:1-7*

The second part of Jeremiah is full of surprising and abundant consolation. Nowhere is this more evident than in these lines today, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, so I am constant in my affection for you." It was good news for the exiles; it is good news for us today.

*Matthew 15:21-28*

The story of the Canaanite woman is remarkable on several counts. First of all, a woman *teaches* Jesus. Secondly, Matthew underlines that Jesus came "only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This exception anticipates the Gentile mission, found at the close of

this Gospel.

#### Thursday 9 August

*St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, (Edith Stein) virgin and martyr*

*Hosea 2:16, 17, 21-22*

The lectionary offers a powerful reading for the feast of Edith Stein, underlining the loving intimacy of God's call.

*Matthew 25:1-13*

Our reading—quite traditional for the feast of virgins—reminds us that there are some things others cannot do for us: making journey inward to the heart of God.

#### Friday 10 August

*St Laurence, deacon and martyr*

*2 Corinthians 9:6-10*

Originally, this reading was about the collection for the Judean Christians, who were poor and under pressure. Paul's reflection on generosity in giving in general, however, is always up to date.

*John 12:24-26*

This short reading, also special for the feast, takes up an image from the parables of Jesus and applies it directly to the cost of discipleship *then* and *now*.

#### Saturday 11 August

*St Clare, virgin*

*Habakkuk 1:12-2:4*

Habakkuk confronts the challenge of believing in a just God and living in an unjust world. In fact, he sounds quite like a prophetic version of Job! There is a specific enemy: the Chaldeans. Habakkuk brings this evident injustice to the attention of God, hoping for a reply. Where is God in all this? The last, familiar line is quoted by Paul in Romans 1:18.

*Matthew 17:14-20*

Our Gospel today is really about ministry. The apostles were indeed already sent out to do as Jesus had done: *Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.* (Matthew 10:1) Such continuation of the ministry cannot be done without a deep and constant faith.