

Reflections on 18th Sunday of Year 26A.

Mass: Isaiah 55:1-3; Psalm 144; Romans 8:35,37-39; Matthew 14:13-21.

Contrasts, Scripture is very good at helping us understand by sharing contrasts. We actually live and grow by seeing things in contrast. In today's Gospel we have the second part of a vivid contrast. We have the famous, or notorious, death scene of John the Baptist, summed up by Jesus being told of his death. It is set in a famous debauched scene of excess dancing, food, and alcohol. A typical party scene of the rich and powerful of the time, indeed all time. In the midst is the callous execution of a holy man and his head on a plate. Probably even the guests were revolted by such horror. Then we have the story of Jesus healing the sick and feeding the poor, rebuilding the twelve tribes. A deliberate reconstruction of the Exodus story. So many times, we can see those kinds of contrasts around us, especially through media. We daily see horrors and huge human suffering on our screens. Even in our towns we are aware of the contrasts of abundance and food banks. The Eucharist, which is being prepared for in today's imagery, by its very simplicity, is meant to bring those contrasts to our mind and heart. The real danger is that, over time, the contrasts get dulled. We begin to accept reality as a given, without questioning.