

Fed by Christ, Formed by Christ and Sent by Christ

A class preparing for first communion was asked, “What is the greatest miracle Jesus performed?” After several answers, a little girl quietly replied, “The greatest miracle was Jesus never sent hungry people away.” I loved this answer because it’s so true. Indeed, wherever Jesus went, people came with many kinds of hunger — hunger for bread, healing, forgiveness, hope, and love. No one who came to Him in faith went away empty handed.

This weekend’s readings invite us to reflect on three movements of the Christian life: fed by Christ, formed by Christ, and sent by Christ. These happen at every Mass and should shape our lives.

Responding to the prophet Isaiah’s invitation, “Come, all you who are thirsty... come buy and eat without money and without cost” (Is 55:1), we too come with our own hunger. Some hunger for peace in their families. Others seek healing from illness or grief. Many long for forgiveness, purpose, or hope. Jesus fulfills that invitation by feeding the multitude and, above all, by giving us Himself in the Eucharist. As Pope Benedict XVI beautifully reminds us, “The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-oblation.” Thus at every Mass we encounter Jesus in His word and in His Body and Blood.

The second movement is to be formed by Christ. We see this when the disciples focused on their lack: “We have only five loaves and two fish,” instead of what they had. Notice that Jesus did not ask for what they did not have, but for what they had. The Christian life is a journey from calculation to confidence. We often say, “I don’t have enough time, money, I am too old, too young, I can’t make a difference.” But Jesus says, bring what you are and have and you will see abundance.

Notice the four actions of Jesus: “He took the bread,” “He blessed it,” “He broke it,” “He gave it.” These actions not only prepare the Eucharist but also describe the faith journey of every Christian. First, we are called by name at baptism and invited to follow Christ daily. Second, through His word, sacraments, and the love of the Christian community, He blesses us with many graces. Third, at times we experience brokenness through suffering, disappointment, sacrifice, and loss — not to destroy us but to make us more like Himself. Finally, He sends us into the world to become a blessing for others. St Augustine beautifully captures this transformation: “Be what you see; receive what you are: the body of Christ.” So allow Jesus to shape your heart into one that is more patient, forgiving, generous, grateful, and compassionate.

The third movement is to be sent by Christ. Jesus did not personally distribute the bread; He involved the disciples. That miracle passed through human hands. That remains God’s way today. Christ continues feeding the world through His Church: through faithful parents in families, through compassionate visitors to the lonely, through generous believers to the poor, through kind words to discouraged hearts, through reconciliation to sinners, and through Christians who live honestly and generously in society. Pope Francis reminds us: “The Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.” Having received such nourishment, we are sent to become nourishment for others.

This week, could it be that your spouse needs listening ears, your child needs encouragement, your neighbor needs your time, someone is waiting for your forgiveness, or perhaps someone

simply needs to know that God has not forgotten them? The miracle continues whenever Christ feeds us and we allow Him to feed others through us.
And may our lives proclaim this simple but powerful refrain: “Come to Christ. Become like Christ. Go for Christ.” Amen.