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Bread That Never Fails

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Procession of Doctrine

by

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* BREAD THAT NEVER FAILS

"I WONDER AS I WANDER"

Sung by
George-Ellen Ferguson

There is a universal quest for God. We may not all use the same name; we may not all say that we are searching for God, but actually we are; for the creature is made for the Creator. Every person has within himself a capacity for God, and without God he is empty. This accounts for the restlessness of human beings, for the frustration in the world. We are searching for God; and the sooner we know what our need really is, the less wandering and wondering we shall have to do.

Some say they are searching for power; others say they are searching for God; some say they are searching for happiness, or they are searching for satisfaction; others will say they are searching for love. This quest goes on all the time, both consciously and unconsciously.

*(Class lecture, March 15, 1953)

ly every person searching for the object of his desire.

A person searching for love may think, "Well, if I could just be married to somebody else, I might have it. If I just had a different group of friends, I would have love; these associates fail to understand me," and so on. Another says, "If I could just be an important person; if I could exercise power, have honor, glory, or riches in the world, then I would be happy." All of these ideas seek satisfaction in the things that cannot deliver it; they are ideas that come into the mind as we wander and we wonder. This hunger goes on and on in the human nature as a craving for something unknown; and the person thinks: "If I could have this desirable object or that successful situation, I would no longer have this craving which is eating into my vitals."

Perhaps it comes about that he is successful in one of his idealistic enterprises, and is able to satisfy this particular craving that he has; but because it is particular and not universal, he finds that he still is craving. Why? Because

the Lord is offering him the satisfaction he wants, but he is brushing it aside to reach for some glittering bauble that will turn to ashes after he gets it; for he is trying to grasp it for itself instead of accepting it through the Lord. Until he has found God, the hunger remains because his hunger is for God. His capacity is for God, and he may fill himself full of this or that; but he will be hungering again, because these finite things, although they may momentarily fill his need, do not really fill that emptiness which can be filled only by God.

Today in the Gospel lesson—perhaps we should remind you right here that the Gospel lesson is not a method to be exercised for a future good; it is the "good news," the good message of how it really is with you now. Instruction in truth is not a method; it is a message. If we could but keep this in mind, much of our traveling about from here to there would be eliminated; instead our lives would be illuminated.

"I Wonder as I Wander," the name of the song we listened to just now, is certainly ap-

propriate for this day, because the Gospel lesson deals with those who are wondering as they wander—just as we are today unless we have found God. These multitudes, the crowds in the Gospel story, had seen some of the miracles; they had glimpses of the power of Jesus, and they followed Him. We are told by the Evangelist Matthew and by Saint John, both of whom describe this miracle, that they followed our Lord even into the desert place. Even if you know the story, and even though we have reminded you of it many times during this Lenten season, you will still love to hear it again; just as the children love to hear a good story over and over though they may know every word by heart—and really, that is the secret of the delight of spiritual good news—by heart! These stories and these illustrations have a wonderful familiarity and provide a constant, wonderful companionship.

They followed the Lord into the desert place. Lent is the time when we are educated in this march through the desert. In our devotions, Lent is called the desert of the liturgy,

that place where we are thrown onto pure faith. When one no longer can find satisfaction in civilization, he retires to the desert. The Children of Israel were led out of Egypt—which was really the realm of darkness, although it seemed to sparkle—that they might find the true power of God's providence. They were fed, and they were protected; and they had miraculous water that came out of a rock—and they wondered as they wandered.

Creation is possible only out of nothing; and nothing means nothing—no pre-existent materials. The desert is the best physical illustration of the nothing which, under the baptism of the Lord's Word, will blossom and bring forth abundantly. The desert is the transition place. God did not create out of existing materials—that would not be creating but assembling; and while He did not despise anything He had created, He did not take leftovers from one enterprise to make another; He created anew. Even the water made into wine was a fresh creation of the Spirit.

These followers of Jesus had seen some of

His miracles; and they went with Him into the desert, even as you have followed our Lord during the liturgy into Lent, into the desert. And they grew very weary, these people in the desert. They had followed Him for many days. They were intrigued—attracted by the miracles, the shadows cast in the presence of Truth—and they thought, “Here is the answer to all that we have wanted!” And it was; they were perfectly right, because this time they were looking for their satisfaction where it could be found. In the ignorance of their minds they were looking for a material kingdom; and they missed the Spirit, the Substance, which is the only thing that can give any worth-while shadows or miracles of goodness in this world. They followed this Master into the desert, and they became weary and hungry. His compassion was touched, and He provided them with the food they craved.

*When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him. . .

*St. John 6:5, Douay version

He realized their hunger. He knew that they were empty, and He knew what they were really empty for; but they felt that they were empty for bread—ordinary, material bread.

The Lord had already overcome His temptation to turn stones into bread; He was not going to supply them with any deficiency—stones for bread—even if they were mistaken and clamored for stones, thinking them bread. He had something far more wonderful in store for them: He was going to give them Himself to be their bread of life. If they would not recognize Who and What He was, He would give them the bread that had in it that germ of the Word Itself which would both feed their bodies and nourish their souls. He had introduced into His prayer that He had taught them, this petition: Give us this day the supersubstantial bread—not just an ordinary, everyday supply of bread, but the supersubstantial bread which was Himself.

In this miracle performed in the desert—the feeding of five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes—the people were filled. They

had never in their lives had the experience of being so filled and so satisfied with any food.

What do you think the Lord was doing here? He was not just feeding them bread from a bakery, although He could have set Himself up right there and then with the greatest bakery in all the world. He could have supplied the world with bread just as the Children of Israel were supplied with manna and water. But He had already overcome this temptation to be the great Baker of the universe. The Children of Israel had this miraculous feeding—but they died. He wanted them to have the desire for, and the consciousness of, the bread which would result in life eternal. He had told the woman at the well that if she had asked Him, He would have given her water, drinking which she would never thirst again.

He longed to have them desire what He was going to give them: the supersubstantial bread—Himself. When He was tempted by Satan in the desert, He had said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God—the word of truth,

supersubstantial bread. In the same chapter of the Gospel of Saint John, which recounts this miracle, He said to the people:

*I am the bread of life . . .

And then He went on to tell them how He was going to feed them with His communion—with His body and His blood. Many of them left Him because they did not like what they heard; they left Him because such an idea disturbed their sensitive nature. They could not tolerate what they heard; and many of them departed from Him when He told them how He was going to feed them—through communion with God.

These people, in a desert place with Him, thought they wanted something material; but He knew that what they really wanted was something spiritual—communion with God. The greatest theologian of all time, the universal doctor of theology for Protestant and Catholic alike, Saint Thomas Aquinas, tells us that the matter, the accident, is only a vehicle—that the real communion is spiritual. You may have

*St. John 6:35, Douay version

the material if you like, if it does something to you, if it helps in some way to rouse you to spiritual communion; but you must have the spiritual communion with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What does the word "communion" mean? It means "union with," and this is the great and eternal principle, union with God; union-with-God, communion. Communion, the eternal principle, was established that man might have God available to him; finite man was given participation with God Who is infinite, and consequently abstract as far as man himself is concerned. The Lord Himself came into the world to unite Himself with man; to form this hypostatic union with man, that this eternal principle might be projected and localized in history, so that down all the ages of time man might have God to turn to. In the Sacrament of the Eucharist man is given material bread and wine. In order that his attention may not wander from what seems to him an abstraction, he is given something on which to con-

centrate, that the Lord may impart to him the great mystery of union with God.

If a person, wandering in this quest for God, can ever realize that he is really searching for God, he has accomplished a great deal. His wandering is no longer on the winding, twisting, weaving paths to nowhere. If he can just discover what it is that he is seeking for, his success is assured; for he will never stop short of God. But he will never find his goal if he meanders about, thinking, "I am seeking for power; I am seeking for happiness; I am seeking for love; I am seeking for health; I am seeking for perfection;" not realizing that these things are *ad extra*, which cannot be satisfying without God. He is really saying, although he does not realize it: "I am seeking for God, for God is health; He is perfection, He is power, He is love."

People come to me and say: "What am I going to do about my domestic problems? Love seems to be flying out the window, though I am always seeking for love." Where are they seeking? Some other possible partner comes

along, and they think, "Oh, that looks good to me!" And do you think they would be any better off to change partners? Never! For the very act of seeking for love is to find love, for God is Love. Happiness, satisfaction—these are never found outside of God. Love is not ever found by seeking your own satisfaction; it is never, never found if your idea of love is to have someone cater to you! People say, "Oh, if I can just have all these things that I want, I will be so satisfied." If they lack love, it is because they do not give love. God so loved the world that He gave, gave, gave! He did not give something from the dime store or something He had no use for; He gave His most precious treasure—His dearly beloved Son—Himself! If you were to give these grasps all the things they want; if a magician should come along and give them all—the magic city complete with all they think they lack—before long whatever it was would become hell on earth. It never was anything but imagination anyway. My father, Mr. Burnell, said, Hell consists in an unmanageable mind.

What are we trying to tell you here? That people, in searching, in craving for satisfaction, for happiness, for perfection, for love, for power—for all of these wonderful things—are really craving God; for all of these things are, you might say, attributes of God. People go on seeking, wandering and wondering, while they would find that even the desert would be a paradise of satisfaction if they would but stop to remember that there is no place where God is not. David said that even if he made his bed in hell, he would find that God was there—and of course it would not then be hell.

Recently we have been using the illustration of the motion picture of the caravan in the desert. The picture is projected on the wonderful river of the water of life, but the people in the picture are dying of thirst in the desert. In the picture they seek for an oasis; and when they get to it, perhaps it proves to be a mirage. But, mirage or oasis, desert or caravan, it is still picture; and the answer to their need is right there where they stand, for the picture

itself is projected on the river of the water of life.

People go on a quest for this, a quest for that; but when the husks are off the "this" and the "that," we see that it is really the quest for God. And why do they not find the very satisfaction they long for? Because they reject the Substance in searching objectively. They are searching here, and they are searching there; they are like the seeker who did not recognize the philosopher's stone when he had it in his hand, so he cast it aside; he had become so used to failure that he did not recognize success when he had it. The more people search the more determined they become in their quest; the more convinced they are that they do not have what they want; and they do not find because they are looking at the objects, not through them to God.

The answer to the quest is in the seeker. I hear people say, "Oh, if I could just change the situations around me and make the people more friendly!" How can they understand that the world, as they see it, is in themselves?

There is a pertinent story about a man who came into a new community and asked, "What kind of people live here?" And the answer was another question: "What kind of people lived in the place you came from?" "Oh," was the answer, "they were terrible; you know, they were always finding fault with me and making fun of me—and on and on through a long line of complaints about his neighbors. And the answer was, "You will find just that kind of people here." The corollary is the story of the man who answered that the kindness and the generosity of the people where he had lived had made him reluctant to leave the place. The answer to his query was, "You will find the same kind of people here." Both were speaking of the same neighborhood. It is not in the changing of situations or in the changing of places, but in finding God everywhere because you are aware of His Presence in everything—including yourself.

That which you seek is in yourself; and there is no method that will make it so—only the acceptance of the message that it is so. The ob-

ject of the search is in the seeker, just as your image in a mirror is really in you and not in the mirror; and when you have once discovered that, your search is for God alone. If you think that you have to search for Him outside yourself, it is because you are under the erroneous impression that your life is somehow separated from yourself; you look upon yourself, perhaps, as a tool being acted upon by life. But this is not the way it is; it is the life in you that lives. You can never be separated from life or from truth for they are one and the same Being. It is impossible to separate anything from truth.

The Lord came to reveal this eternal principle and to manifest it as a recorded, historical fact in the acts of His life on earth, that we might never again slip from the consciousness of it. We call this act the Incarnation. The Word of God assumed and united human nature with His divine nature—hypostatically, personally, humanly and divinely He united them in Himself. This is no mixture of two natures—He did not mix divinity with the na-

ture of man. He lifted the nature of man to be one with His divine Person in the Word.

When He feeds us with His word, He gives us something that we can eat; for in the spiritual life the word is the thing—the word “bread” is bread. We eat the Scriptures; we eat the word and swallow it with our faith, to have it reverse the natural processes and digest us, lifting us to itself.

In the miracle recounted today in the Gospel, our Lord looked up; and He saw that this great multitude around Him was hungry—very, very, very hungry. They had not come prepared for so long a stay and had not brought any provisions with them, but His teaching was so soul-satisfying that they could not leave Him. Jesus, knowing their need, asked His disciples, What shall we do? He did not need to ask because His questions were never put from ignorance, but from intelligence. He knew very well what He would do. But He wished to draw out of those around Him the understanding that truth is available

in any situation. Therefore He put this question to them:

*...he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

Philip was called the very practical one; so the question was asked of him in order to bring out the impossibility of meeting this situation with worldly practicality. And Philip answered Him:

...Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone may take a little.

Even if there were a convenient bakery, it would take quite a large sum to buy enough so that each could have a little. But there was no bakery near. Then,

... Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many?

He thought that even though those five barley loaves were to be pulverized, there would be hardly a crumb for each of the five thousand men. And of course the women and children

*St. John 6:5, Douay version

were not counted, so there were a great many more than five thousand hungry mouths! An impossible demand according to the mathematics of the world.

The great secret of our Lord Jesus Christ is that He does not deal with either subtraction or division. He does not divide His good. He does not give this person a little piece here and another person a little piece there. When He gives, He gives all. And His promise of the hundredfold in the world that now is is tremendously practical. He gives all!

Not too long before this episode, the Lord had fed four thousand with seven loaves and two fishes. Of course the people had forgotten all about that—they did not remember that miracle; it had come to seem commonplace as time passed. Even the apostles did not remember. Isn't it strange? They had been with Him, and yet they did not remember.

How easy it is to forget yesterday's miracles in the domineering of today's necessities! We begin to wander, and wonder about things again; we try to remember what it was that we

were so excited and grateful about day before yesterday! We are intent on the moment; "How am I going to meet this present problem?" Yesterday, or last week, an obvious miracle took place in your affairs and you were grateful for the solution of your problems. But today, when you come up against another situation, you feel no confidence in the memory of your other gifts of grace; instead you say: "Well, this is different; this is really a problem. I do not know how I am going to meet this."

Here were five thousand men—plus an indeterminate number of women and children. There were only four thousand before, you know, and there were seven loaves then; now there are five thousand and only five loaves, and small loaves at that. These particular "loaves" were said to be about like our little French rolls—no bigger than that; you could easily eat two along with the rest of your meal. The ratio of bread to hungry mouths was all out of proportion. Very inadequate, the supply on hand!

Have you met with this kind of situation in

your affairs—resources very inadequate to the situation? And what is your reaction to an apparently hopeless predicament of demand and supply?

It is suggested that Philip—who was so very practical and who would know to the ounce how many calories would be needed for a given number of persons—remembered an Old Testament account of Elijah who had fed one hundred men with twenty loaves—but that proportion would make the supply in the present crisis seem even more meager. Philip was confronted by that blank wall of the human estimate of things, based on division and subtraction; and he thought that fewer loaves would provide fewer meals. Five loaves among five thousand! It might be that twenty loaves would feed one hundred—he could quickly estimate a fifth of a loaf apiece—and perhaps Elijah's loaves were more ample. But five loaves to feed five thousand and more! Certainly here was a problem: What is this they said, among so many?

Do you know what the Lord did? Apparently He had little or no worldly practicality, for

He asked that these loaves be brought to Him—inadequate though they were. He might have been remembering about the woman who was asked: What have you in the house? or He might have remembered about the widow of Samaria whose cruse of oil and handful of meal never lessened after the word of God had been spoken over them—or perhaps He just remembered the goodness of God! He did not look at the little loaves and say, Oh, too bad, there are not enough—an inadequate supply—too little; bring me more and I'll pass them around. He did not say that!

He took these loaves into His hands, and He looked up to heaven. What was He doing when He looked up to heaven? He was looking away from the estimate of the world—the constrictive and restrictive economics of the world, based on division and subtraction and fractionality. He had taught these people to pray: Our Father Who art in heaven . . . give us this day . . . on earth as it is in heaven. And He looked up to heaven. He was considering another level of things: the supernatural, the

miraculous. The law of the miraculous—even though we have not realized it—is definitely a law. The Lord never breaks a law with His miracles. He simply brings into our horizon of vision a law that we have not before realized, and we correct our estimates to include what we had not before been aware of. Our modern scientists are constantly having to correct the interpretation of the instruments they have established to measure the universe. The latest report is that they have found the universe to be twice as large as previously estimated, because the “yardstick” on which they base their calculations has been misinterpreted, according to the newly revised computations.

The Lord did not use division in this miracle of the loaves and fishes—He used multiplication! He used the power of increase, of multiplying. In mathematics there is a principle called exponency, indicating power. It means multiplying a thing by itself. He used this principle of power. He took this bread into His hands and blessed it; and it responded, just as the water had responded by turning into wine

at His blessing. He did not curse it and say, "You are not sufficient, you are not adequate."

Do you bless or curse your situations? Do you curse your world by saying and thinking: "Why am I so poverty-stricken? Why am I so weak? Why am I so impoverished—without friends and without love? Why do people turn against me and speak against me? Why do people find fault with me?" This is blasphemy and cursing.

The Lord took what was at hand—His own handiwork you know—because He had created everything out of nothing. He did not disparage the things He had created. He took the bread, inadequate though it was, and He blessed it; and He broke it and passed it out through the hands of His disciples. And the people were fed. Not only did they have plenty to eat, but they sat down to eat. He told them to sit down—in the desert! He told them to sit down, and they sat down on the grass. The practical mind would protest, "There isn't any grass growing on the desert." But miracles abound in the presence of the Lord. He does

not say that things are the way they seem just because they look so; but things are the way they are, because He says so! They sat down on the grass and He passed the bread by the hands of His disciples.

He did not, however, allow any of the fragments to remain. You would not think there would be fragments, would you? Five loaves and two fishes supplying five thousand—plus! Yet there were twelve basketfuls of bread left over—imagine that! He did not let the fragments lie around on the ground to be trampled under foot; He had His apostles go out and collect the fragments. Nothing of this bread of life was to be wasted.

These people who had been so adequately fed liked what they received very much; and they began to wander and to wonder, and they said: "If we could just have such a king as this—one who could take five loaves and supply the multitudes—that would be a wonderful king to have!" They saw only the shadow of the miracle for they were still looking for the material instead of the spiritual, and they

thought it would be expedient to make Him king. So He had to run away from them for He had no intention of being a material king. He said, My kingdom is not of this world. But they could not hear him.

He is a spiritual king, the King of all kings, the Source of all supply, the Lord of light, God of Very God. When we have dependence on Him, we have inexhaustible resources—the impetuous infinity of riches. He never runs out; His inexhaustible riches are always available. We are required only to ask. It is said:

*Your praying to Self-conscious Eternity, constitutes the instantaneous Self-conscious availability of everything.

And His riches are not to divide, remember that; the Lord does not work with division. Division is a false action of the mind of materiality, never the answer to our need for eternal life.

If these five loaves had been divided among the people, they would not have known that

*Program of Righteousness 23, by George Edwin Burnell, page 6

they had had even a crumb, the fractions would have been so small; and the people were so hungry. But the Lord did not divide the bread, nor does He divide Himself when He bestows upon us the Bread of Life. He gives Himself wholly and completely to every one, and every one has the capacity for totality.

Instead of seeking outside for that material kingdom, seek within for the capacity for God. Our perfection consists in our total capacity for God; then will come the realization that there is nothing at all but God. We are told: Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. And He has made this hunger blessed that it may be a capacity, an emptiness for Him to fill; for nothing but God can fill this capacity, let alone satisfy this hunger. Crumbs of the world can never fill our emptiness; dividing the wealth of the world will never fill it. But the Lord fills to capacity because He is All in all. It is He Who gives you love, and He gives you perfection; He gives you health and happiness and satisfac-

tion, because He is All; there is nothing left to desire.

If you seek to fill this hunger, this craving in yourself, with material things, you will find that your craving is insatiable; you are always greedy for more. The more you have, the more greedy you are; and the more greedy you are, the more forgetful you are of the Lord Who is All in all, until you have cut yourself off from all satisfaction. Gratitude to God for His being God dissolves the torture of secularity, and your cup runs over with His Goods—His Good things.

This miracle of the bread foreshadowed the supersubstantial Bread—His Body—which the Lord gives, wholly and completely. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word—the Bread of Life—that proceeds from the mouth of God. This mystery the mind can never grasp; being materialistic and practical, it will say, "Well, how can every person have all?" The material world and the secular mind deal only in division and subtraction—and call it practical. The restrictions, the limitations of

our mathematical mind say it is impossible for all to have all.

If we cannot let go of this worldly viewpoint, we have separated ourselves from the miraculous because we are bound by the mathematics of our own mind. But if we break the hypnotic fascination of matter and turn our attention to heaven as Jesus did when He looked upon this Bread, we turn to a higher dimension; and that opens the channels for the powers above to flow into our affairs.

Saint Thomas Aquinas gives us an analogy—if we must have explanation of how these miracles can be—speaking about this word that proceeds from the mouth of God, the Bread of Life, the Word made flesh:

*... if the passing word of man is heard at once by many, and wholly by each, is it incredible that the abiding Word of God should be everywhere at once?

I speak a word here, and every one of you hears that word wholly and completely. I do not have to divide it and give one person the

*The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, Vol. 15, page 6

“w” and another one the “d” and so on. I do not divide that word. Every one of you hears it wholly and completely without division. The word seems to multiply, to multiply in you; and each of you has it wholly and completely. We have no trouble with the perception of health as being total; we do not imagine that we divide health and let each have a little. We can be perfectly healthy without thinking that we are subtracting or dividing health, or taking away from someone else. But only when it comes to material substance, such as wealth, do we think that it must be portioned out. When we realize that matter is nothing, there is no problem of division for to divide nothing is the same as no division. Nor is the division in truth for truth is indivisible. So with every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; every person who hears it and becomes not only a hearer but a doer also, has that Word within himself that he may seek his happiness within. Then he gives instead of grasping to obtain; and the satisfaction that he gives and the love that he gives he pours out because he

has within himself that abiding word that is whole and complete everywhere, and that does not have to be divided.

This action is called the gift of miracles, the exterior radiation of interior deification that comes to you with the abiding of this Word within your own heart. It radiates into your environment so that you, too, speak the word; and it is heard, and it is accepted, and it is loved. It is poured forth from that inexhaustible Source because you place your dependence on God.

Now let me give another illustration. This miracle is preparing the way for the Sacrament of Communion. This sacrament is not a ritual though it can be a ritual, too; there is no objection to that. But the actual sacrament is a spiritual communication with God, a communion with the all-abiding Word, with the image of God, whole and complete, in yourself. As the Virgin said in her fiat, My soul doth magnify the Lord. And your own soul can magnify the Lord. You cannot divide Him; He is never broken into fragments. He, the Image

within yourself, is whole and complete; and your soul magnifies Him, whole and complete.

This is an illustration given by Saint Thomas Aquinas in his book called "The Bread of Life." We are speaking of this Bread, this Word, that proceeds from the mouth of God and that the Lord blesses and distributes to the multitude. If there had been forty thousand or four hundred thousand or any number, it would have made no difference because the finite can never add up to anything in the infinite. Each one would have received fully and completely because there is no deficiency in the Word of God.

*If you set many [mirrors], so that your face can be seen in them, one face will appear in all equally and wholly.

You will not have a nose here and a mouth there; but in each mirror you will have the whole face, complete—a perfect image.

*Bread of Life, by St. Thomas Aquinas, page 91

If, on the other hand, you break up a [mirror] into many little bits, one face will be seen perfectly in each bit. Moreover, though the glass be broken into many pieces, your face remains one in all, and is not changed.

And so this Word of truth that comes to you is whole and complete. There is nothing inadequate; there is no deficiency in this Word; it is whole and complete, and it is perfect and absolute. It comes to you to be, not only your satisfaction, not only your love, not only your perfection, not only your health, but your All because it is God. And when you have God, there is nothing left to desire.

But observe that the setting for this miracle is in the desert place. We learn from Saint Matthew as well as from Saint John that Jesus feeds these men who represent us, Christians. They, as we today, have quitted the bustle and the noise of the city in order to turn attention to Him. So anxious are they to hear His word that they fear neither hunger nor fatigue; and their courage is rewarded.

A like recompense will crown our Lenten labors, our fasting and our abstinence, which are now more than half completed, for this is the fourth Sunday of Lent. We are halfway through the desert. How far can you go into the desert? That is a good question for it brings out the perception that you can go only halfway, because at the halfway place you are going out if you continue; or, if you turn around, you are still going out. Those of us who have been persevering in our devotion to the Lord and have followed Him even into what seems to be a desert and have been patient about it, are now on the way out of the desert and will receive our recompense.

This day is also called the Sunday of rejoicing, for we are no longer going into the wilderness. We are now coming out, rejoicing—rejoicing in the glory of God revealed to us this day.

*Let us, then, rejoice, and spend this day with the light-heartedness of pilgrims who are near the end of their journey. The happy moment is advancing, when our soul, united and filled with God, will look back with pleasure on the fatigues of the body, which, together with our heart's compunction have merited for her a place at the divine banquet.

**Grant, we beseech thee, O almighty God, that we, who are justly afflicted according to our demerits, may be relieved by Thy comforting grace [and brought into that wonderful banquet which is communion with God].

GENEVIEVE BURNELL FORGEY

*Liturgical Year, Lent, by Dom Gueranger, page 318

**Ibid., page 326



