

The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

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Newsletter for the 2nd week of Passiontide from Sunday 14th March.

Dear friends,

During the four weeks of Passiontide the altar and the vestments are black. And over this time we see how Christ battles the forces of duality, the forces of black and white. These are the false polarities of either /or, the black and white, yes/no of dead binary thinking. Good or bad. Heaven or Hell.

Towards the end of these four weeks, on Good Friday, he will go to the Place of the Skull. There He will die, and after 3 days He will rise again.

Christ exists in the living world of flow, of change and transformation.

He works in the changing subtleties of the world of colour. When His opponents ask Him questions designed to entrap Him, He gives them answers from outside of their framework, answers from the flowing world of living reality.

Today we still battle with the kind of deadness that our brain-bound intellect so easily falls into.

We still tend to manifest one or the other of the ill-making polarities in the way we think, thus closing ourselves off from greater possibilities.

Nevertheless, we try to open our thoughts in reverence. We struggle to warm our hearts in empathy.

We strive to act according to the inspiration of our conscience, our higher self.

In those moments when we manage reverence of thought, when we generate heart's love, when we do deeds of conscience, in those moments Christ can work in the world. In such moments Christ is in us. At such moments He thinks in us, suffers in us, dies and rises in us.

Ben van Lieshout

Hollywood

For Sunday services, please ring (02890424254), text (07974960570) or email (benvl@onetel.com) to book a place as we can only seat 11-13 people.

Passiontide

Thursday 11 th March	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Sunday 14th March	The Act of Consecration of Man Followed by talk and conversation: "Why we had to lose the Spirit"	10.00
Thursday 18 th March	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00

The gospel for the 2nd Sunday of Passiontide, 14 March is John 6, 1-15

After this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee near Tiberius and a great crowd of people followed him because they had seen the signs of the spirit, which he had performed on those who were ill.

Then Jesus went up on the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

When Jesus raised his eyes to the world of the spirit, and beheld how crowds of people were coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that all these people may eat?"

He asked this to test his understanding and presence of mind, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "200 denarii [seven months wages] would not buy enough bread for them each to have only a little."



Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up: "A boy is here with five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are these among so many?"

Jesus said, "Let the people sit down in groups." There was plenty of green grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and gave to those who were seated, likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

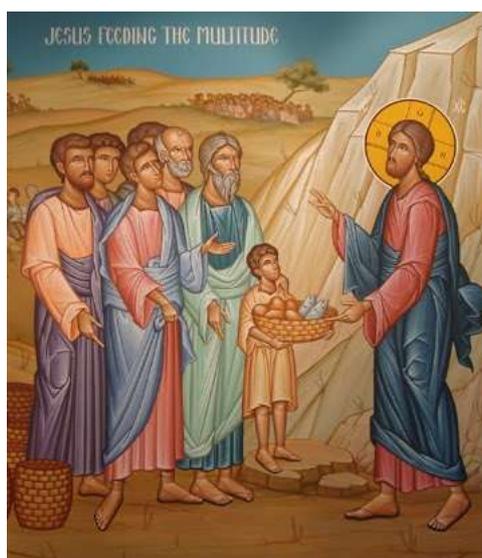
Now when they were satisfied, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." So, they gathered them, and they filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. Seeing the sign that he had done, the people said, "Truly, this is the prophet who is to come into the world."

When Jesus became aware that they intended to come and make him king by force, he withdrew again to the mountain alone by himself.

A homily on John 6: 1-15

To maintain our earthly existence, we must eat. There are saints who have been able to exist by taking in no other bread but Communion. We ask ourselves how this is possible.

In the gospel reading, Christ's question to Philip – where shall we buy bread – is in essence a question about whether nourishment can only be mediated by the earthly, by money. And Philip's answer is accurate on the earthly level—seven months wages would not be enough to feed so many.



However, the answer to how to feed the people can also have another starting point: a young boy's gift, five barley loaves, made from spring's first harvest, two fish from the watery element. In paradisaic Galilee, the people sit in an elevated place, on green grass, between heaven and earth, as the sun is going down. The first stars become visible. And to what seems to be very little bread in earthly terms, Christ, with gratitude, adds what truly feeds us—the Father's light, His life, His love from the realm of the stars. Christ leads the peoples' hearts into an awareness of the realm of pure Life itself. The life realm is where living things multiply, thirty, sixty, a hundredfold. It is a realm of *more than enough*. The material part of bread is a necessary carrier; but a bite, a crumb of living bread suffices; what nourishes, what satisfies our heart's deepest need, is the thirty, sixty, hundredfold life in it.

It is also quite possible that in this realm of *more than enough*, the people too were able to offer what they had brought. They multiplied the gift. Filled with the Christ blessing, there was more than enough; there was enough left over to show them, and us, that our true nourishment is mediated, not only through the forces of the earth, but through the living forces of the Father's circle of the stars. There is more than enough, in order to show that

'...What in the bread doth feed,

Is God's Eternal Word, His life, His light, His deed. (Angelus Silesius)

In consecrating ourselves today, we offer and receive in gratitude. We partake in a process wherein Christ blesses and fills bread with his Life. One day, for us too, *more than enough* will be all that we need to live.

Thanksgiving

For the speaking light of the senses
Which bears into our souls
The world's abundance,
We thank the powers of heaven.

For the health that is in our bodies,
Even in illness and need,
Sustaining, renewing, refreshing,
We thank the will of Christ.

For the wonders of human friendship,
Which bless the life of earth
With the hope of eternal being,
We thank the Father's love.*

*Adam Bittleston, "Thanksgiving",