

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me! You are my rescuer, my help; O Lord, do not delay.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 144)

ANTIPHON: The hand of the Lord feeds us: he answers all our needs.

RESPONSE: The hand of the Lord feeds us: he answers all our needs.

LECTOR: The Lord is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in love. How good is the Lord to all, compassionate to all his creatures. **R.**

LECTOR: The eyes of all creatures look to you and you give them their food in due time. You open wide your hand, grant the desires of all who live. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord is just in all his ways and loving in all his deeds. He is close to all who call him, call on him from their hearts. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) You have given us, O Lord, bread from heaven, endowed with all delights and sweetness in every taste.

or

I am the bread of life, says the Lord; whoever comes to me will not hunger and whoever believes in me will not thirst.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 55:1-3; Romans 8:35. 37-39; Matthew 14:13-21

NEXT WEEK (19th Sunday, Year A) 1 Kings 19: 9, 11-13; Ps 84; Rom 9: 1-5; Matthew 14:22-33.

Brighten up
your day with
The Majellan

ACPA Conference

The annual Australasian Catholic Press Association conference and Awards Dinner will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand on August 26 to 27. Those who work for Catholic organisations in the Media/ Communications/Events field are welcome. Membership and conference enquiries at:

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Paul's purple passages



2 August 2026 18th Sunday Year A

The widely acclaimed Jesuit Scripture scholar, Nicholas King, has produced a wonderful translation of the scriptures, striving to present the message in a form of colloquial English, designed to reflect the way the authors would have spoken in their own time.

For example, Archbishop Desmond Tutu described "a splendid piece of work" that "hits you between the eyes." Nicholas also adds his own commentary and when I saw what he said about the readings for the 18th Sunday of the Year, I was fascinated by the following comments. He spoke of "this lovely passage" from Isaiah, of Paul's "purple passage" and of "this charming story" in Matthew.

The fact that many scripture passages become very familiar may mean that, in time, we fail to notice just what "lovely" or "purple" passages they are and therefore fail to be "charmed" or moved by the message they are conveying. Like all the prophets, Isaiah often feels the need to warn us of the dangers that can lead us astray, but by the same token he also sees beyond, to how God always wants the best for us and that the best is accessible.

The "lovely" picture of God wanting to quench our thirst and satisfy our hunger is part of that unfolding narrative in the scriptures which sees the Kingdom of God in terms of a great banquet. It links us to the underlying message of this week's gospel – the 'Feeding of the Five Thousand' – which, in turn, points us to the foretaste of that banquet which we have in the

gift of the Eucharist. And notice how Jesus uses the occasion of the feeding as a lesson for the apostles and for us that we are called to be the providers.

The instinct of the apostles was that this was all too much for them and the people should be sent away to find food for themselves, but, of course, the Eucharist will become the ultimate sign and reminder that this is how we are to look after one another and be united through Christ with our Father in Heaven.

Finally, notice how Paul presents us with one of his many purple passages. There are times when Paul comes across as a very hard taskmaster. Often, he seems to be weighed down with his struggles and even irritated with the lack of response from some of the early Christian communities.

In chapter eight of his letter to the Romans he does indeed wrestle with the huge challenge of a disordered world, but has no problem in concluding that ultimately Christ will triumph over every problem that presents itself: "neither death nor life, nor angels or rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

May we have the confidence and the courage to go forth and proclaim that message to our troubled world.

Timothy Buckley CSsR

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