

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand (Matthew 14:13-21)

Bill Gaultiere ~ [Ignatian Meditation Guides](#) ~ [SoulShepherding.org](#)

Guidelines: Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

Ignatian Meditation Process: Ignatius chose this Gospel reading for Week 2 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then “ask for the grace.” Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what’s going on. Don’t analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a “colloquy” (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

Introduction: After John the Baptist is martyred by King Herod Jesus withdraws to a solitary place with his band of disciples. But the crowds find him and he allows his retreat to be interrupted so he can minister healing to the sick and works through dinnertime. His disciples don’t have the bandwidth for such a generous spirit and want to send the people away. Instead, Jesus says they should have compassion for the people and feed them. They scrounge up a few loaves and fishes. Jesus blesses and breaks them and gives them to his disciples to distribute. He multiplies the food to feed all five thousand! Afterwards he’ll use this miracle to point to an even greater miracle that meets the deepest need of all people: he himself is the Bread of Life (John 6).

Ask For the Grace: Lord Jesus, I ask for the grace I desire: to know you more intimately, to love you more intensely, and to follow you more closely.

Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Matthew 14 (MSG)

13-14 When Jesus got the news [that John the Baptizer had been executed], he slipped away by boat to an out-of-the-way place by himself. But unsuccessfully—someone saw him and the word got around. Soon a lot of people from the nearby villages walked around the lake to where he was. When he saw them coming, he was overcome with pity and healed their sick.

15 Toward evening the disciples approached him. “We’re out in the country and it’s getting late. Dismiss the people so they can go to the villages and get some supper.”

16 But Jesus said, “There is no need to dismiss them. You give them supper.”

17 “All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish,” they said.

18-21 Jesus said, “Bring them here.” Then he had the people sit on the grass. He took the five loaves and two fish, lifted his face to heaven in prayer, blessed, broke, and gave the bread to the disciples. The disciples then gave the food to the congregation. They all ate their fill. They gathered twelve baskets of leftovers. About five thousand were fed.

1st Reading: Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don’t seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with? Or are you a bystander?

2nd Reading: Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?