

**Weekly Gospel Readings**  
**The 2nd Sunday of Meshir**

## **Feeding the Multitudes**

Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks,  
he distributed them to those who were seated. [John 6:11](#)

On the 2nd Sunday of the blessed month of Meshir, the Church reads John [6:5-14](#). In this passage, Christ feeds the 5000, not including women and children, from 5 loaves and 2 fish. While this story is read numerous times throughout the year, this specific excerpt focuses on the limitless power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We, as humans, are extremely limited in our strength, in our energy, and in our rational thinking. However, as seen by this passage, we can achieve far beyond our inherent human limits through Christ. Dr. Noshy Abdelshahid connects this miracle to the life of the Church: “The miracle of the loaves is not only historical, but ecclesial. It reveals the Church as the place where Christ multiplies what is offered in faith.”

The passage begins with Christ asking Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” ([John 6:5](#)). Did Christ not know of the miracle to come? Certainly not. Rather, He asks this question to examine the rationale of His disciples. Looking around and seeing the large multitude, Philip cannot fathom how the multitude could be fed. He answers and says, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little” ([John 6:7](#)). Philip does not comprehend the might and power of our Lord. As St. Cyril explains, “Feebly again does Philip advance, not to the power of Jesus to do all things, and that easily, but on hearing whence shall we buy said to prove him, forthwith he catches at it, and looks at the means by money alone...” By not adding Christ into the equation, Philip’s thinking becomes extremely limited. As Pope Shenouda III explains: “Faith does not cancel the mind, but it elevates it. Without faith, the mind collapses under the weight of facts.”

Andrew then adds to the conversation by saying, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” ([John 6:9](#)). Once again, Andrew has the same mindset as Philip. Andrew notices that there is only a small amount of food available and cannot envision any way of using the mere five loaves and two fish to feed the multitude. St. Cyril of Alexandria explains, “For neither considering the power, nor yet led by the greatness of His preceding works unto Jesus' being able for all things, and that most easily; he points out what the lad has, but is evidently weak in faith...” Thus, the limited rationale of both Philip and Andrew is simply due to their lack of faith. As Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty Commented: “The tragedy was not the smallness of the loaves, but the smallness of expectation. Faith had not yet matured to trust abundance.”

If the disciples who lived and learned from Jesus every single day exhibit a lack of faith, how much harder is it for us to have faith that expands our mindsets? Yet, we need to have a strong faith rooted in Christ to overcome the trials and tribulations in our lives. If you look at society and the world we live in, it may seem impossible to resist the world and focus solely on Christ. However, as seen by this miracle and countless other miracles, nothing is impossible if we have a strong faith.

St. Paul writes, “I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me” ([Philippians 4:13](#)). St. John Chrysostom expands on this saying, “Any achievement I have had belongs not to me but to the One Who gave me strength.” Let us always keep this mindset in our hearts so that we can achieve and serve far beyond our own human limits.

**Sources:**

- Bible. English Standard Version
- Catena, Orthodox Bible Commentaries
- Lectures on Johannine Theology, Cairo Patristics Center, Dr. Noshy Abdelshahid
- St. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of John, PG 73
- Pope Shenouda III, The Life of Faith
- Commentary on the Gospel of St. John by Father Tadros Malaty