

JUNE 22 2025, FATHER MICHAEL COUTTS

Our three readings today would make a beautiful triptych of stained glass windows. Imagine: Abraham, crowned with a victorious wreath, Melchizedek adorned in royal priestly garments of red and gold. Let your imagination run wild. At the center, the Last Supper—perhaps as painted by Leonardo da Vinci. And finally, Jesus on the hillside in Galilee, surrounded by colors of gold, orange, red, and green, as people gather around baskets of bread and fish.

These vivid images are beautiful for prayer and reflection. But the readings are more than just a feast for the eyes. Their deeper meaning can be summed up in two powerful words: blessing and sharing.

Abraham had won a great victory and wanted to give thanks to God. In our day, we give thanks through Mass, by lighting candles, or donating to charity. Abraham had none of these. So, under the open sky, his “church” was the sky itself, and he asked Melchizedek—a Pagan priest of a god called Elion—to offer a blessing.

Remarkably, though Melchizedek was not part of the covenant, God designated him as a priest. Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and Abraham, in turn, shared—not just a token, but a tenth of all he had won. From this act, we get the tradition of tithing, which continues today in our offertory collections at Mass.

Our second reading is rich in meaning. The Father so loved the world that He blessed all creation—the birds in the air, the fish in the water, the animals on the ground, and men and women everywhere. And He loved us so much that He shared His Son with us.

Jesus, in turn, blessed His apostles and, though He would return to the Father, He desired to remain with them. So He shared Himself with

them: “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I will be.” He took bread, blessed it, and shared it.

In the early Church, this bread was not reserved in a tabernacle. There was no Blessed Sacrament as we know it. After Mass, the deacons consumed all that was consecrated. The Eucharist was meant as food for the journey—spiritual nourishment for pilgrims traveling toward the heavenly banquet.

Today, we hear much about synodality. Though some shy away from the term, its meaning is simple: from the Greek “syn” (together) and “odos” (on the road)—together on the road. When Father Henk and I come to celebrate the Eucharist with you, we are on the road—on a journey in faith, in synodality—with all of you.

Then we come to the Gospel’s beautiful scene: Jesus blessing and sharing once more. He looks upon the crowd with compassion. They have journeyed with Him, hungered for His presence. He tells His apostles, “You feed them.” That is our mandate today: to care for the people around us.

Imagine Jesus taking the bread and fish, blessing them, and distributing them—not just for that moment, but as a sign of what was to come. Later, He would take bread and wine at the Last Supper, bless and share them once again—this time as His own Body and Blood.

But that night, He also shared something more. He washed the disciples’ feet. He gave them the commandment to love one another as He had loved them.

This is our call as well.

As we journey through life, nourished by the Bread of Life and the Chalice of Salvation, we are called to share with others—not just

through words, but through actions of love shown in service. The Church is most credible when it is found at the feet of the people it serves—washing, caring, loving.

Only then can we say we are truly nourished. Otherwise, the sacrament becomes just a symbol. It must become real.

The only way you and I can make it real is by making it a part of ourselves—where we encounter Jesus, and through Him, encounter and serve the people around us.

Let us bless, let us share, and let us serve.