

## First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-5

<sup>1</sup>“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. <sup>2</sup>Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. <sup>3</sup>Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make

with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. <sup>4</sup>Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. <sup>5</sup>Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.”

The second part of Isaiah is often about God restoring the people and their faith following the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the people being exiled to Babylon.

1. What kind of invitation does God give in verse 1?
2. Why is there no cost?
3. What does God encourage us to do diligently?
4. Why is this time in which we live a very important time to really listen to God?
5. How can we understand verse 5? What nations?

## Second Reading: Romans 9:1-13

<sup>1</sup>I am speaking the truth in Christ — I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit — <sup>2</sup>that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. <sup>5</sup>To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. <sup>6</sup>But it is not as though the word of God has failed.

For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, <sup>7</sup>and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>8</sup>This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. <sup>9</sup>For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>10</sup>And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, <sup>11</sup>though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad — in order that God’s purpose of

election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls — <sup>12</sup>she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”

<sup>13</sup>As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

In this section Paul grieves over the Jews who have not believed in Christ.

1. What is Paul awaiting or longing for in verses 9:1-3?
2. Why does he have hope for them? verses 4-5?
3. What does Paul mean not all Israelites are Israelites?
4. What does the saying mean, "God will have mercy, on whom he will have mercy"?  
verse16

### **Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21**

<sup>13</sup>When Jesus heard of John the Baptist's death, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup>Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” <sup>16</sup>But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to

eat.” <sup>17</sup>They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” <sup>18</sup>And he said, “Bring them here to me.” <sup>19</sup>Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The context of this feeding of the five thousand is that John has just been executed in prison by a travesty of justice! No trial, no justice, just brutal hatred and drunken justice!

1. What does verse 14 emphasize about Jesus?
2. Why do you suppose the disciples wanted Jesus to send the people away? Why do you suppose Jesus wanted the people to stay together? Is this just about physical hunger?
3. Jesus tells them to feed the crowd. This is a key verse to understanding how to deal with suffering? Why?
4. In verse 19, what did Jesus do that communicates something vitally important?
5. What is the significance of the leftovers?