

# Universal Prayer

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**2 August 2026**

**Presider:** *Trusting in the God who feeds us abundantly and whose love nothing can overcome, we bring our needs before him now.*

1. **For the Church:** that like the disciples we may hand over our loaves and fishes, and trust God to feed his people.  
[pause] We pray to the Lord.
2. **For our leaders and nations:** that resources may be shared justly, and that no child anywhere goes hungry today.  
[pause] We pray to the Lord.
3. **For our local community:** that newcomers may find welcome, belonging, and a table where they are fed body and soul.  
[pause] We pray to the Lord.
4. **For those discerning the call to priesthood and consecrated life:**  
may they be supported by the church and by their families to respond generously wherever Christ leads them.  
[pause] We pray to the Lord.
5. **For all young Catholics:** that amidst the many voices of our time, they will hear and follow the voice of Jesus, calling them to fullness of life. [pause]  
We pray to the Lord.
6. **For all who feel empty despite abundance:** the anxious, the lonely, the addicted:  
that they may come to the living water and be satisfied.  
[pause] We pray to the Lord.
7. **For our beloved dead,** and all who have died in loneliness or need:  
that they may feast forever at the heavenly banquet  
where nothing can separate them from God's love.  
[pause] We pray to the Lord.

**Presider:** *Loving Father, you satisfy the hunger of every living thing. Receive the prayers we offer and fill us with your abundant grace, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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## Community Greeter | 2 August 2026 (Sunday 18)

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Welcome everyone to St John's, as we gather on the lands of the Dharawal people.

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_
- Our celebrant is Fr John | Fr Richard
- Hungry for meaning, for love, for hope — we gather here, where Jesus himself takes, blesses, breaks, and gives.

We welcome **every guest** today, especially if you are new.

***We are so glad that you are here with us!***

☞ 1. If there is Music: ☞

Let us stand and prepare ourselves as one body as together we sing:

☞ or 2. If no Music: ☞

Let us be united as one body as we stand and pray the entrance antiphon together:

O God, come to my assistance;  
O Lord, make haste to help me!  
You are my rescuer, my help;  
O Lord, do not delay.

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### Penitential Act [Priest]

Before we celebrate in the love of the God who is always calling and inviting us, let us pause and acknowledge our need for healing and life. *[All pause for silent prayer.]*

- Lord Jesus, you are the living water for our thirst: Lord, have mercy.
- Christ Jesus, you bring peace to our anxious and restless hearts:  
Christ, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, you are the bread broken for our hunger: Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,  
and lead us to the life of the age to come. Amen.

### [At the end of Mass]

Thank you to everyone who arrived early today to help us be a single body united in prayer from the very beginning. It makes such a difference to our whole community and celebration together. So, thank you!

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## **“There Is No Need for Them to Go Away”**

There is a moment in today's Gospel that deserves to stop us in our tracks. The disciples — practical, well-meaning, probably exhausted — look at the size of the crowd, look at what's in the basket, and reach a sensible conclusion: send them away. It's late. There's not enough food. Let them fend for themselves.

Jesus will not have it.

“There is no need for them to go away,” he says. “Give them something to eat yourselves.”

That refusal — there is no need for them to go away — is one of the most quietly revolutionary lines in the Gospel. It captures everything about who Jesus is and what the Church is meant to be: a community that does not send hungry people elsewhere to be fed, but opens its hands, offers what it has, and trusts God with the rest.

The miracle that follows is breathtaking, but notice how it happens. Jesus doesn't bypass the disciples. He takes their loaves and fish, blesses them, breaks them, and hands them back to be distributed. The feeding is cooperative. The disciples are essential. Their inadequate offering, placed in Jesus' hands, becomes more than enough.

That is the shape of every Christian vocation. You are not called to be extraordinary before you show up. You are called to show up with what you have — your time, your story, your wounds, your gifts — and place it all in Jesus' hands.

Isaiah said it first, to a people in exile with nothing: “Come to the water. Come without money. Come and eat.” The invitation has never been rescinded.

This week, the question worth sitting with is simple: What are my five loaves and two fish — and am I willing to offer them?

## **When Five Loaves Are Enough**

We live surrounded by plenty, yet so many of us feel strangely empty. Isaiah names it perfectly: we spend our money on what cannot nourish and our wages on what fails to satisfy. Into that ache God calls out an invitation that sounds almost too good — “Come to the water... buy wine and milk without money, free.” The things we most deeply need can never be purchased. They can only be received.

In the Gospel, a grieving Jesus looks at a hungry crowd of thousands and refuses to send them away. Instead he turns to his tired disciples with a startling command: “Give them something to eat yourselves.” All they have is five loaves and two fish — hopelessly inadequate. But Jesus takes, blesses, breaks and gives, and everyone is satisfied, with twelve baskets left over.

The lesson is quietly revolutionary. Jesus does not multiply what we cling to; he multiplies what we hand over. Our small faith, our limited time, our modest generosity — placed in his hands — become more than enough to feed a crowd.

Paul reminds us why we can risk such trust: nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. That love is the bread we carry into our week.

This week, come to the table hungry and be fed. Then take one basket into your neighbourhood. Feed someone — with food, with time, with attention, with an invitation. To know, follow and share Jesus is simply to keep handing him our loaves. He'll take care of the multiplying.

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