

peoples, from the four points of the heavens, are filled with the sevenfold grace of the Spirit unto Life eternal.

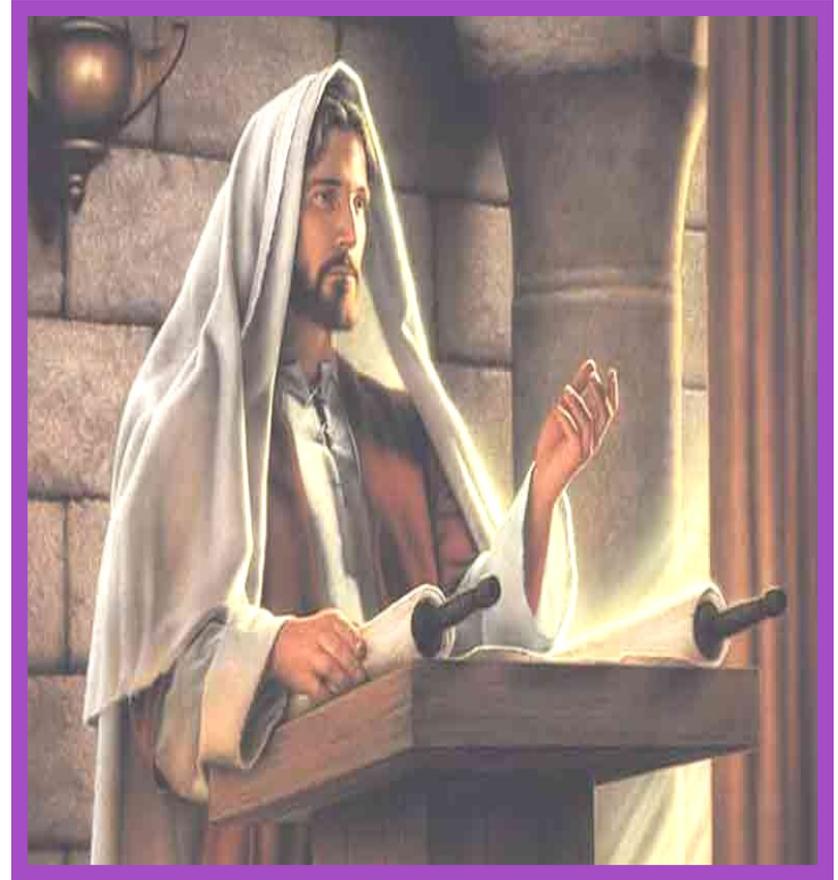
We who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, not through the Law, but by faith, who are redeemed, not by its works, but by grace

itself; who are filled not from the five loaves, that is, from the Five Books of Moses, but by the seven-fold grace of the Holy Spirit, as the blessed Isaias (Is. xi), let us continue in this grace of the Sevenfold Spirit, in which we are called. Being filled with *the gift of the Holy Ghost* (Acts ii. 38), through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns in the Unity of the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.



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SERMON ON
THE MYSTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
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JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

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Commentary on the Gospel of Mark 8: 1-9

by: Saint Maximus, Bishop

... In this reading from the Gospel we are to consider at the same time in our one and the same Redeemer, the separate activity of both His Divinity and His Humanity... The Lord had compassion on the multitude, lest they faint of hunger or through weariness of the long way to their homes, makes known to us that He possessed the tenderness and affection that belongs to human weakness. The feeding of four thousand men from seven loaves and a few fishes was a work of divine power...

What is the meaning of this great and mysterious event and why does God reveal Himself in this way to His Disciples?... Earlier (Mt. xv.) the Jews had come to the Savior complaining that His Disciples *did not wash their hands when they ate bread*. The Lord answered them, that it was rather the evil things that come forth from a man's heart that soiled a man. Then leaving them He came into the territory of the Gentiles, where a woman of Canaan, who stands as the mother of the Gentiles, besought him on behalf of her daughter; that is, the Church. She prayed to Him with such perseverance that at length she obtained what she prayed for, after this, He cured one who was deaf and dumb.

When the multitude of people had flocked together, they had nothing to eat: for the Gentiles had not the Law, that is, the Five Books of Moses and the Prophets; nor the preaching of John: because the Gentiles came to the Redeemer, not through the Law, but through faith. They

persevered with Him for three days; that is, during the Birth, Passion, and Resurrection of the Lord; or in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. To persevere means to remain steadfast in the praise of God, as the Lord himself says: *He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved* (Mt. x. 22).

The Lord says: *They have nothing to eat, because they have not the Law; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way:* so that they who believed through faith in Christ should be saved through the faith of Christ. *For some of them came from afar off.* The Gentiles were far off from God, wandering among idols; and even now every one who sins is far off from God.

His Disciples say to Him: *From whence can any one fill them with bread here in the wilderness?* Unbelief still held the mind of the Disciples in its grip; until the mysteries would be revealed. Neither did they remember what he had wrought from the earlier miracle of the five loaves and the two fishes... We believe that the wonders of the Lord are seen most clearly even now...

Here, the seven loaves stand for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to Isaiah, xi. 2; seven also represents the *seven Churches, or the seven golden candlesticks* (Apoc. i. 4, 20). An undefined number of fishes is spoken of, which are the gifts of grace the Apostle spoke of in (I Cor. xii. 8). Sitting on the ground represents the same power, grace, in the one Divinity. The ground represents those who tread down the things of earth. Four thousand means that all the