

**The Book of Signs:  
Reading the Sacraments in the Gospel of John  
Week 4 | The Bread of Life**

1. The fourth sign (John 6:1-15)

- a. What is the liturgical context of this passage (i.e. what feast is about to occur)?
- b. The evangelist narrates Jesus's actions in a way that should remind us of something quite familiar. What is it?

“Jesus then *took the loaves*, and when he had *given thanks*, he *distributed them* to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, ‘*Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost.*’” (John 6:11-12)

- c. Why do you think the feeding of the multitude and Jesus's resurrection are the only two miracles included in all four Gospels?
- d. Upon witnessing this sign, what does the crowd conclude about Jesus's identity in John 6:14-15? (Refer to Deuteronomy 18:15 and Malachi 3:1-4, 22-24.) In what ways is this conclusion correct, and in what ways does this conclusion fall short?

2. The Bread of Life discourse (John 6:22-59)

- a. In John 6:25-34, Jesus reveals the people's true motivation for seeking him. What is it, and why does it fall short of Jesus's desire for them? Why do you think they ask Jesus for a sign so soon after being miraculously fed by him?

- b. Jesus says he is the bread come down from heaven (John 6:41) and that eating his flesh gives eternal life (John 6:50-51). These statements should remind us of two other miraculous foods in Scripture. What are they, and how is Jesus's flesh the fulfillment of these earlier "types"? (Refer to Exodus 16:11-15 and Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24.)
  
  - c. How does Jesus respond to his listeners' objection to the idea of eating his flesh and drinking his blood? Does he use increasingly spiritual or increasingly physical language? For example, is belief alone sufficient for eternal life? Why or why not?
3. Reading for next week: John 9:1-41 (The fifth sign)
- a. Look for clues pointing to one or more sacraments.
  
  - b. Pay attention to the formerly blind man's gradual realization of Jesus's true identity.