

We live in a superabundant time. The harvest is rich. This is the time when the young birds can begin to find food for themselves and the parents can at least begin to let them go. The unkempt corners of the garden compete with those laboured over by us or rather, Denise and William, to produce a banquet of seeds and surplus fruit, bushes dripping with blackberries, elder fruit and sloe and self-sown mini plums. It's all there for the taking, including an embarrassment of courgettes and potatoes. It's harder work for the young predators as their prey is not so willing to be taken and we hear a young buzzard in a tree nearby, still pestering its mother. And Jesus hears his disciples, still unsure of themselves and the bounty which God provides. 'Go and find it yourselves,' he says. 'It's at hand. It's within you.' But they still feel they have nothing to give; nothing, that is, until they themselves are satisfied. So what we hear is their own dissatisfaction, their own need still to be fed before they dare to feed others; but this will always be so until the feeding of others begins. A public eucharist has not been possible for some time now, in Turvey, but eucharist can begin anytime, anywhere. We make eucharist in every meeting with others, socially distanced or not. We *are* eucharist to one another. Far from this time being a period of spiritual impoverishment, we can now realise our need for one another as never before. Indeed, it's been a time when we have learned once again how a little can go a long way; the friendly gesture, the occasional word, the stepping aside for others. And gardens, for those who have them, can recover their original purpose as places of encounter. Sit and eat, or at least have a cup of tea. The weather, of course, helps: no mention of rain in Galilee. So what the disciples see as a problem Jesus sees as an opportunity. Take a risk, share, and see what happens. And it's been our experience here, that the yeast of hospitality – with all due precautions, of course – far from exhausting our resources, spiritual, personal and otherwise, leaves us brimful and flowing over. Before all else, what we have to thank God for is one another. Anything else, including Mass, is less than fully eucharistic. Loving God and loving neighbour are one and the same. Jesus mourns John the Baptist and seeks a necessary solitude to find peace again, but God's abundant giving is such that he knows he can risk an encounter with the crowd that has followed him and not be disappointed. There will be time for solitude later. Indeed, in his giving he finds himself blessed.

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