

**Lectionary readings: Isaiah 55: 1-5; Psalm 145: 8-9, 14-21;
Romans 9: 1-5; Matthew 14: 13-21**

For reflection and prayer

- **Isaiah 55:** We are all spiritually thirsty and hungry, and longing for inner peace and satisfaction, and we search frantically for what will fulfil us, not realising that what God offers is what we are looking for. And it's all free! God, in His generosity and extravagance, offers us Himself and the wonder of His love. He is an extravagant God who holds nothing back from us if we open our hearts and lives to receive Him. Imagine yourself this week standing under a tap that spills out living water non-stop. Lift your face for its refreshment; feel its freshness; drink from this life-giving, refreshing, renewing water of God's presence and feel yourself tingling with excitement.
- **Psalm 145:** Here are the attributes of the God we worship: kind, merciful, slow to get angry, full of unfailing love, good to everyone, full of compassion, strengthening all who are burdened, lifting up those who cry out to Him. This is a God that we can safely approach, just as we are, and share with Him whatever is on our heart and mind, our fears, our longings, our desires, our hopes. God is a God who loves us and wants to give us all we need. *'O Heart of my heart, envelop me! I know You are near to all who call upon You When I speak, let it be of blessing and gratitude; let Your glory within me shine out to the world.'* (Psalms for Praying) May we this week open our inner ears, see with spiritual eyes and trust that, even amidst

the chaos of our lives and our world, God is lovingly at work bringing healing and wholeness.

- **Romans 9:** Paul grieves over his own people, the Jews, for, despite all that God has done for them, and all He has lavished on them, revealing Himself in so many ways, they have failed to see God in Christ. If Paul were around today, he would be grieving over us, God's people, for, like the Jews, we turn our backs on God and shut up our hearts to His love, failing to see Him at work in our lives and spurning the lavish gifts He has poured into us. Let's face up honestly this week to where we are on our journey of faith, to how much God means to us and whether we are availing ourselves of all that God has given us.
- **Matthew 14:** Jesus is saying the same to us today as He said to His disciples. We are surrounded by crowds of hungry, needy people, just as Jesus was that day in Galilee, people who are empty, sad, desolate, unfulfilled, longing for something more than material things can offer. We lament the state of our society and judge people, thus sending them away empty-handed, but Jesus says to us, 'You feed them.' And, like the disciples, we say that we have little to give them. But we have a generous, extravagant God who has given us Himself. All we have to do is open our hearts to the unlimited abundance we have within us through His Spirit and then go out and share Him with others, pouring out His love, mercy, forgiveness, acceptance, understanding, kindness, peace, hope. It may appear to us to be crumbs that we have to offer, but God loves to take our crumbs and multiply them to feed His people. So let's this week offer ourselves and what we have to God and see Him perform miracles in and through us to the glory of His name.