

ENOUGH AND MORE THAN ENOUGH

Sometimes, in order to help me to get a deeper sense of what the Scriptures mean, I try to place myself in the scene as one of the disciples. Today Jesus is tired and sad because of the death of John the Baptist. He tries to get away for a few days but suddenly there are all these people. All kinds of people. Young and old. Sick and healthy. Good and bad. Weak and strong. And Jesus has this compassion for each of them, for all of them.

It has been a long day. Many of them hurried to get to where Jesus was going to be so that they might be healed. Not everyone brought along food. There were vendors there but they were overwhelmed by the number of people. Five thousand. They ran out of food pretty fast. The people are tired. And hungry. Jesus sees this. They realize this. So, when Jesus says to his disciples: “You give them something to eat,” I try to picture what the look on their faces must have been when they heard that. “Us? Give them something to eat? What do we have to give them? How can we feed them? Lord, are you kidding?”

When he asks them what food they have they tell him: five loaves. Two fish. For thirteen of us. What is that little bit against the daunting task of feeding this multitude? Impossible. It seems impossible. Why even try? What difference does it make? This little bit? I have felt that way before. When I was faced with some daunting challenge. The sickness of my dad, my mom, my sister, my best friends, beloved parishioners, the crises that arise all the time. I have felt the inadequacy. What difference does my little bit make? What difference does my effort make? What difference does my prayer make?

But it does. And that is what today’s gospel story is about. It is not the fact that five loaves and two fish is very little with which to feed a big crowd. The story is about what Jesus is able to do when we stop holding back our little bit, our inadequacy, our lack and place it in his hands. He will take our little bit and he will lift it up to the Father and call down the divine blessing. He will then share with his disciples to distribute to everyone present what has been blessed. Some bread. Some fish. Somehow it is able to continue. Somehow it is able to spread. Somehow it is able to be handed from one to another until all have had something to eat. Somehow it feeds everybody there. And then. Jesus tells the twelve to go among the people to gather up fragments. There are twelve baskets full. They did not even have one basket of food to begin with.

There is the miracle. When we give our little bit to God—in real trust—He can use it to nourish and sustain a lot of people. So now, right here, in 2020, in the middle of a pandemic I have felt very diminished. Haven’t you? What do I have in the face of this potentially lethal disease? What can I do? What can I give? Well, there are some simple things. I can wear a mask. I can observe social distance. I can wash my hands. I can pray. Not much, these things. Just a little bit. Like a few loaves. But let me give it to Our Lord. See. My friends, where we often fail, as human beings, is underestimating what we have. We underestimate what Our Lord is about to

do with whatever we give him. We fail just like the apostles. What could Jesus possibly want with what I have?

Sister Faustina, the Polish nun to whom Our Lord revealed himself as Divine Mercy in the 1930's, had conversations with Jesus. In one of them, Jesus takes her to task. He says that she has been holding some things back from him. She is crushed. She grows upset. She claims she has not held anything back from Jesus. She claimed she gave him everything. Jesus responds that this is not so. What has she held back, she wants to know? He tells her. Her sins. Her wounds from past hurts. Her inadequacies. Her weaknesses. Her failures as a person, as a woman, as a nun. She was holding all that back from Christ. She thought: What could he possibly want with these things? But Jesus does not care about that. He just wants us to give it all to him. Only He can transform these things into something beautiful and worthwhile. That is what his grace can do—BUT only if we give him something to work with. Our little bit. Our five loaves. It's crucial.

Are you? Are you giving him everything? Every part of your life? Your relationships? Your failures and your successes? Your joys and your sorrows? Your pains and your hopes? Who do you want to feed because you see they are hungry and need to be nourished and you love them and want to help them? But feel you have so little to give.

Will you entrust your little to Our Lord? Will you entrust yourself to Our Lord? My friends, it is the only way. Give it to him and trust him. Even what seems impossible. What seems beyond hope. Give your little bit, your loaves. And you will see. And all will be fed. There will be enough and more than enough.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.