

## 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time

July 26, 2009

*2 Kings 4:42-44; Ps 145: 10-11, 15-16, 17-18; Eph 4:1-6; Jn 6:1-15*

### Homily

The story in today's gospel about the feeding of the multitude is one familiar to every Christian. The loaves and fishes symbolize for so many of us the reality of the Eucharist in our lives. Jesus feeds us with His Body and Blood—a banquet of never ending grace. The gospel doesn't tell us what Jesus taught the crowds that day but what He did. In the details of this story we can find Our Lord teaching us that His power works wonderfully well with simple things—a few loaves and two fish. Notice that Jesus involved His apostles in this work of love. He also used a little boy's simple gift to manifest His power.

Saint Paul picks up on this lesson elsewhere when he speaks of God's power working well with our weaknesses. What looked like the impossible task of feeding such a large crowd of people with only a few loaves and fish turned out to be a satisfying meal for so many that there were even leftovers to be gathered. Today we know that there are poor in our own country and countless hungry men, women and children throughout the world. We learn this from the media or from our personal experience. Through our trust and creativity we can be Christ for these neighbors by sharing the bounty we still enjoy. Let us open our eyes to ways that we can bring the necessities of life to others—by joining with others to feed the hungry after Christ's example.

Our resources may be limited—Think! only five loaves and two fish—but the gospel message is clear. There can be enough for everyone “with 12 baskets left over and nothing wasted.” What seemed so impossible: to feed a multitude with a few loaves and fish turned out to be a satisfying meal. In our lives at present some of us may be carrying other burdens so heavy that it seems impossible to endure—a sudden death or terminal illness in our family, loss of employment and our financial insecurity, the betrayal of a friendship. You can add to the list. In all of these we can find relief in Saint Paul's message to the Ephesians today: through our one faith, one baptism, one God, Father of us all we are not alone. Burdened or called to assist another in need, let us be a people of hope.

The gospel also tells us that this marvelous event took place when the people were about to celebrate Passover. The message of this feast centered on the deliverance of the chosen people from their oppressive life in Egypt and their return to the promised land. We can find in it an opportunity for renewed hope in the power of God in our own life and in the lives of others. If we are tempted to say “What are 5 loaves and 2 fish for so many people?” let us remember that with God all things are possible.