

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

A little boy who got into a heated argument with his sister about who was going to get the last brownie. Their mother overheard this discussion and came in to try to resolve the fuss. Her two children, both extremely upset, each wanted that last brownie. So, sensing the opportunity to teach a deeper spiritual truth, the mother looked at her children and asked that very relevant question...“What would Jesus do?” Well, that little boy immediately answered, “That’s easy. Jesus would just break that brownie and make 5,000 more!”

Dear Friends,

Food is a vital part of our lives. It is also a big thing around the world to feed everyone. Everyone in the world deserves food, as all deserve to live.

Both the readings talk about feeding the people. The first reading, taken from the Second Book of Kings, prepares us for today’s Gospel which describes the miraculous feeding of more than five thousand people by Jesus, using a boy’s gift of five barley loaves and two dried fish. Acting through the prophet Elisha, God fed about 100 people with 20 barley loaves.

The miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 is found in all four Gospels, although the context and emphasis vary. This is the only miracle, other than the Resurrection, that is told in all the Gospels, a fact that speaks of its importance to the early Church. Compare Mk 6:35-44 with Mt 14:13-21, Lk 9:12-17, and Jn 6:1-14. Matthew says that there were about 5,000 men, not including women and children.

Both incidents tell us that God works marvels through ordinary people and meets the needs of people through the services provided by members of the community. God uses you and me as an instrument to share our gifts. We can share food with the people who are in need. We can also share what we have. The beauty of the Gospel is that we don’t even know the name of the boy who had five loaves and two fish.

With regard to giving food, we can have two approaches. One is like St. Mother Theresa feeding the individuals, another approach is like Dorothy Day changing the structures.

The bottom line of the readings today is to share and care what we have. Every sharing starts in a small way. I have seen the starting point of the Mississippi River (Lake Itasca) a small place which covers one half of the nation.

God’s works are small when it starts, (like a mustard seed) when it flourishes or when it is shared and cared, it becomes huge. God is a caring Father, and He wants us to co-

operate with Him and become part of His caring for all of us, His children. That's what the early Christians did, generously sharing what they had with the needy. They were convinced that everything they needed to experience a fulfilling life was already there, in the gifts and talents of the people around them. People of our time need to be encouraged to share, even when they think they have nothing to offer.

Think about what we have to offer in our lives today. Is it a talent? Is it financial? Is it spiritual?

How many times do we think that what we offer is so small? But, like the boy who offered what little he had; God used that offering for something great.

Go and offer a small gift to yourself this week and ask God to multiply it. You may be surprised how God can work his miracles through you as well.