

Who Likes Math?

This time of year, when our calendars turn to August, we start to see that back to school advertisements and signs start to appear. Do you remember preparing for going back to school?

Well today, we hear of a Gospel with a Math problem, specifically a mathematics problem of multiplication. But as we know, school is more about just Math so I will throw a little Theology class in as well.

First let's crack open the Theology Books--The Feeding of the Multitudes (Fish and Loaves Story) is recorded in how many of the Gospels? Did you guess 4? Well then you were correct. It is one of the only "miracle" stories that is recorded in the bible. What is the other "miracle" story found in all four Gospels? If you said the Resurrection, give yourself an A.

Those two events are the only ones that are shared in all four of the Gospels. We understand why the Resurrection was noted in all four, but why the miracle of the feeding of the multitude? Many theologians point to that miracle as a true foreshadowing of the Eucharist, which of course is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith. So when it comes to the Theology lesson, we can see why these are so important in our faith.

Now, to open your Math Books. Who likes Math? Maybe there are a bunch of engineers and accountants in our gathering today.

In the first reading, the math for opening a restaurant certainly may not add up to a successful business when it talks about

"You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk!"

Jesus of course is not running a restaurant with that business plan, but points to an eternal banquet that all who walk in faith can look forward to attending.

I remember back to fourth grade when we had a competition named the Multiplication Hot Seat. You had to take each number and multiple it by other numbers leading up to twelve. For instance, $1 \times 2 = 2$, $1 \times 3 = 3$. Then the following day we had to go up the scale and use $2 \times \dots$ Etc. You would only have one chance a day and you were only given 30 seconds to perform the task.

I was the first one to make it through all the multiplying all the way up to 12 in a timed format—It is interesting on how fast the numbers go up when you have a larger multiplier.

Today Jesus uses an extremely large multiplier in taking the two fish and five loaves and miraculously multiplies them to feed over 5,000 people. Jesus used this story as a sign that he can take what you give him and multiply it to help build the kingdom of God.

If you give him your time and talents, he multiplies it. If you give him your money, he multiplies it. If you give him your energy, guess what? He multiplies it.

We can use a practical example right here in our local area. When a farmer plants a seed, does he just get one corn seed back? Not you get stalks with hundreds of corn kernels. But what is the key element, especially for a farmer—faith and trust.

Imagine for a moment what could have gone through the disciples head when Jesus asked what kind of food to you have. “I brought this food and now I have to share it with those who didn’t think ahead and bring their own food.” “If I share this loaf, I will only get a few crumbs.” But in the end those who shared had faith and trusted that Jesus would do something with it. Everyone had so much to eat and there was food left over.

So what are the blessings that you have that Jesus is asking you to give to him?

Could it be money? How about food? How about clothing? How about your vehicle? How about a boat? How about some hunting land?

Almost 15 years ago now, Leigh Ann and I and Duane Pionke were asked to share our land with the Bow Hunting for God retreats and allow others to hunt on our lands. We have had over 250 men attend the retreats since then and God has provided us with an abundance of deer on our land, including trophy deer each year. I never could have known the impact that would have and then last week a person saw a message on our Great Outdoors Retreat page and wanted to share it with me.

Do you realize how many people that you have saved and bring to the Lord’s Table through the retreats Deacon Jim? It is a lot and I am glad that God has brought me to the Great Outdoors retreats.

God multiplies very well, but I do remember this from my multiplication tables. Anytime you try to multiply something with zero, you get zero. What is God asking you to give to him to multiply? Maybe this week we need to think about that and let God work his miracles again by multiplying what you give him to work with .

God’s Blessings

Deacon Jim