

READINGS & REFLECTION FOR THE 17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME.

A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS 4:42-44

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing Elisha, the man of God, bread from the first-fruits, twenty barley loaves and fresh grain in the ear. 'Give it to the people to eat,' Elisha said. But his servant replied, 'How can I serve this to a hundred men?' 'Give it to the people to eat' he insisted for the Lord says this, **"They will eat and have some over."** He served them; they ate and had some over, as the Lord had said. **The Word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM PS 144:10-11, 15-18

All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign and declare your might, O God.
The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

The eyes of all creatures look to you and you give them their food in due time.
You open wide your hand, grant the desires of all who live.
The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

The Lord is just in all his ways and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him, who call on him from their hearts.
The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS 4:1-6

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. **There is one Body, one Spirit,** just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is **one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all,** through all and within all.

The Word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation: A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people. Lk 7:16
--

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 6:1-15

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee - or of Tiberias - and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down.

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough, he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself. **The Gospel of the Lord.**

REFLECTION from Michael Fallon MSC (www.mdfallon.com)

The Gospel writers are not interested in giving us a simple accurate account of events. They are sharing with their readers the insights into the meaning of Jesus' words and actions which Jesus' disciples were privileged to receive during the years in which they shared their lives with him. The writers are also sharing what they and later disciples came to understand about Jesus when they reflected back over Jesus' death and resurrection. We have to live with the fact that we cannot be sure exactly what happened by the Sea of Galilee. In some miraculous way hungry people were fed by Jesus. Of their nature miracles are impressive, but we would do well to reflect on the comment offered on this scene by St Augustine: *The governance of the whole world is a greater miracle than the satisfying of five thousand men from five loaves. Yet, at the former miracles no one is amazed; at the latter miracle, people are amazed, not because it is greater but because it is rare. (Tractate 24.1.2 on John)* John's interest is not bread for the body but wants his readers to 'come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, silently active, transforming us and drawing us into closer intimacy with Himself, drawing our hearts to Himself and teaching us the wisdom of God.

HOMILY Reflection for 17th Sunday Year B 2021 by Fr George Joseph

Do you believe in miracles?

The gospel today speaks about a miracle that Jesus performed.

I remember a joke. It was something like this.

The mother of little Johnny came to collect him after the Sunday school class. While in the car, the mother asked. Johnny, tell me, what did you study today?

Johnny said, "Today we heard the story about Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea". "Tell me more about it," said the mother. To which Johnny said, "Well, the Jews got out of Egypt, but Pharaoh and his army chased after them. The Jews ran as fast as they could until they reached the Red Sea, but they could not cross the Sea. Meantime the Egyptian Army was getting closer and closer.

So, Moses took his mobile phone and called the Israeli Prime Minister and asked him to send the Israeli Air Force to bomb the Egyptians. While that was happening, the Israeli Navy built a floating bridge over the Red Sea, and they crossed the Red Sea.

Knowing the real story the mother asked, Johnny,

"It is unbelievable! Is that the way they taught you?"

"Well, not exactly," admitted Johnny, "but, Mom, if I have told you the way they taught it, you would never believe it."

Little Johnny had imbibed the secular mentality of our age that makes no room for miracles and spiritual realities.

In today's story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, St. John mentions two disciples by name: Philip and Andrew, who represent two types of faith.

Philip represents the naturalistic faith that does not allow room for miracles. He was realistic enough to know that five loaves and two fish were nothing before a crowd of 5,000 people. On the other hand, Andrew represents supernatural faith that makes room for miracles.

While Philip focused on the problem, Andrew focused on Jesus who made water into wine. He knew the ability of Jesus to perform miracles and he knew that Jesus did not make wine out of nothing; but he made it out of something.

A miracle is not something that God working for us; it is God working with us.

And it is the duty of each one of us to provide that 'basic something' so that God can work miracles through us.

There are two possible ways of this miracle of feeding the five thousand happened. In either case, both of them are miracles.

Firstly, Jesus could make the food appear out of nowhere because nothing is impossible for God.

The second way is different, and we all can do that miracle.

Among the crowd who came to see Jesus were both the rich and the poor.

The poor have little food while the wealthy have plenty.

Jesus taught the people about love and the joy of sharing. Now there comes the small boy with five loaves and two fish and he shares it with Jesus and others. Seeing this generosity of the poor boy the rich who had plenty decided to share their food and there was more than enough for everyone and still plenty left over.

The real miracle is making love appear and not making the food appear. When there is love, everything is there.

Dear friends, no one in the world would starve if we all would share with the poor. And that would be the greatest miracle Jesus could perform with our help.

Like the boy, we too have little to give. But, for the Lord, it is plenty. God expects us to come to the aid of one another and to share the little we have.

Jesus gave Himself completely in the Holy Eucharist. Nourished by his body and blood, let us live our lives for our brothers and sisters and perform great miracles of love.

Sometimes, we too face with difficult situations, which seem to be impossible to solve; like sickness, financial problems, work related problems, family problems etc. When things go wrong in our lives, like Philip, we should not focus our attention on the issue alone, which makes things worse. Rather, like Philip, we must focus on Jesus and His ability to perform miracles which will help us to overcome our difficult situations.