

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE ORDINARY TIME (YEAR A)

Isaiah 55:1-3; Psalm 144: 8-9. 15-18 (R.16); Romans 8:35, 37-39; Matt 4:4; Matthew 14:13-21

OFFER HIM YOUR FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH

"Renew once more the offering of yourself to God: give Him a continual sacrifice of your thoughts, words, and actions, desiring and praying only that all may be for His glory and the good of the hospital." - St. Vincent de Paul, CCD 4:238

One young boy inquisitively asked, "If God is the owner of all wealth, why then do we give offerings in the Church?"

My dear brothers and sisters, last Sunday Jesus enlightened us through his parables that no sacrifice can match the priceless value of God's kingdom. Today he gently invites us to reflect on his generosity and how a little sacrifice we offer him can align with his abundance by positively affecting many people.

At a time when the Israelites lapsed in faith while in exile, God spoke to them through his prophet, Isaiah, pleading with them to return to him for the true food and drink that satisfies their innermost longings, since the food of sin couldn't satisfy them. In other words, salvation is God's free gift, and Grace cannot be purchased. This isn't limited to only Israelites, but it's a universal invitation.

In response to God's compassion and generosity, St. Paul, in the second reading, affirms with a rhetorical question that nobody and nothing can separate us from God's love: **"Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?" (v.36)**

In this gospel pericope, Jesus intended to have some rest when the crowd of people invaded his privacy. In his compassion, he prioritised their need and preached to them. God's compassion always precedes miracles, and this encourages us to be compassionate too.

When he saw that the people were hungry, he challenged his disciples to give them food to eat. This is a wake-up call that following Jesus means sharing his mission by taking responsibility for helping people.

Unfortunately, his disciples saw scarcity, but Jesus saw possibility. When the five loaves and two fish were offered to him, he prayed over them, and a crowd of five thousand men ate satisfactorily. It's interesting how God works through ordinary, limited human resources.

This simple gesture of sacrifice, which came from a young boy, was the bedrock of this miracle, teaching us the great positive effect which a little gesture of sacrifice can have in the lives of people. Thus, offering to God is golden. Have you given Jesus your five loaves and two fish?

After the multitude of people ate satisfactorily, Jesus asked his disciples to gather the remnants, and they gathered twelve baskets. This teaches us that while God gives us lavishly, we shouldn't waste any of his precious gifts.

Grant that by being compassionate and sharing God's gifts, we may touch people's lives. Amen.

HAPPY SUNDAY TO YOU!

Nicholas, CM;

Witnesses Homilies (Mt. 10:32)