

## 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (A): Feed by Jesus to Feed Others (2020)

This Sunday, the readings unanimously remind us of God's tender love and inspire us to respond to his love through a life of gratitude intentionally.

In the Book of Prophet Isaiah, we are told that God reassures the exiled Israelites that he will provide drink to the thirsty and food for the hungry and renew his everlasting covenant with them. He said, "All you who are thirsty, come to the water! Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Come to me attentively, listen, that you may have life" (Isaiah 55:1-3). If you are exiled and deprived, how can you not respond to this invitation? God is calling them out from their misery. This reminds us that in times of distress and restlessness, we are called to listen, we are called to come to God attentively. If we heed his voice, we are reassured through the words of the responsorial psalm, "The hands of the Lord feeds us and answers all our needs" (Ps.145). When we listen and come to him attentively, we are being fed and heard by the Lord.

We have several opportunities to come and listen attentively to the Lord. Did you know the virtual retreat, the "**Be Coming, the series**," uploaded on our parish website, offers reflections on how to deal with distress and restlessness? The younger generation of this parish -- Tyler, Kaye, Faith, Fay, and Joel with the technical support of Onie and Mark -- led the meditations through the Sacred Scriptures, songs, and reflections. It is worth watching and listening to many times. (please check at <http://www.facebook.com/hicocathedral>)

Yes, the hands of Lord feeds us and answer all our needs.

The story in our gospel tells us how our Lord Jesus feeds and answers those who come to him. We are told that after hearing the horrible death of John the Baptist, Jesus went to a quiet place to find comfort -- he was grieving over the tragic death of his cousin. We learned those sick people, and those who wanted to listen to his words went ahead of him and met him there, and the tender heart of Jesus goes out to those who seek him. He went about ministering others while he was bleeding inside. This our Lord Jesus, St. Paul is quite confident to say, no anguish, no distress, no persecution, famine, peril, and no sword that can separate us from Christ's love (cf. Rom 8:35).

Notice, our Lord Jesus could have rested immediately after that long day, but he was presented with another need — people were hungry. It could have been more convenient and straightforward for him to dismiss the crowd which his disciples exactly proposed to him: "This is a deserted place, and it is already late, dismiss the crowds so that they could go to the villages and buy food for themselves" (Matt 14:15). It is a realistic and practical suggestion, but the tender love of Lord Jesus goes beyond what is realistic and practical. He commanded the disciples to bring out what they have. The little they had, five loaves and two fish, when placed on his hands turned out to be more than enough. The miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish happened!

This miracle foreshadows the Holy Eucharist's incredible gift, which feeds us not with bread but with the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus. This marvelous gift deserves our attention to contemplate. But it is equally remarkable to contemplate the actions of Jesus and his tender love.

Jesus manifested and accomplished his tender love with the help of his disciples. His disciples were given the privilege to participate in his miraculous action. This privilege is also given to us. Just as the disciples offer their five loaves and two fish, we are called to offer our part to share in God's tenderness to others.

The question is: What will be our five loaves and two fish?

When we gather around the altar to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, we offer our own five loaves and two fish -- our offerings that represent our life, our thanksgiving, including our pains and struggles this week. Our Lord Jesus receives our gifts in the same manner as he took the five loaves and two fish from the disciples. He

nourishes us through the Holy Eucharist to have his life and the strength to go forth. He feeds us that we might feed others. He blesses us that we might bless others.

In gratitude to our Lord Jesus' incredible love, let us make our grateful response. Once again let us give life to the words of our patron saint, St. Therese of the Child Jesus, "Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love."

Be safe and healthy!

In Christ,

Fr. Manny Hewe  
Pastor, CCST