

My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday's Gospel presents to us the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. However, I would like to explore how the miracle was in fact a lesson for all Disciples of Christ. How can such a miracle be a lesson? The Gospel begins with Christ healing a crowd so large, that by the evening, the Disciples say to the Lord, *"This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."* (Matthew 14:15) The Twelve are small compared to the five thousand, which, as the Gospel says, are *"...five thousand men, besides women and children."* (Matthew 14:21) From a human perspective, the Disciples' concerns are understandable: they have also been with the Lord all day, attending to the needs of the crowd; surely, they are also tired and hungry.

So, when we hear Christ say, *"They need not go away; you give them something to eat"* we hear the compassionate God-Man who loves and pities His Creation. (Matthew 14:16) However, the Disciples hear something so astonishing it makes them frustrated! They have spent all day working, and now the Master expects them to feed this crowd? *"They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.'"*

(Matthew 14:17) In this moment their exhausted hearts are hardened; they cannot hear what the Lord tells them, and they forget that even the small number of loaves and fish are still a blessing from God.

Therefore, our Lord begins His lesson to His Disciples by demonstrating how to serve others. First *"...he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass."* Here, we see our Lord as perfect God, who is always in control. Further, He demonstrates a true type of the Eucharistic act when, *"Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves..."* (Matthew 14:19) This He does to remind the Disciples that *"...for God all things are possible."* (Matthew 19:26) Having demonstrated the need for compassion, our Lord completes the action, giving the loaves, *"...to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds."* (Matthew 14:19)

My beloved, there are many astonishing things about this miracle, but the most important to remember is even if God alone can perform miracles, He undertakes them through His servants. The true lesson is our Lord calls us to imitate His compassion, acting the service that He demonstrates with gratitude and humility, and with repentance when we fall.

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