

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time – August 1&2, 2020 – Reflection

" ... Give them some food yourselves. But they said to Him, 'Five loaves and two fish are all we have here.'"

The Gospel of Matthew in the 14th Chapter

I've never in my life been desperately, dirt poor nor have I ever been really hungry. But, back in my college years, when I lived in apartments off campus with two other guys, I was in charge of the grocery shopping and much of the cooking. On a good week when we were flush with cash I could shop for the three of us on \$21, on a bad week though when we were all short, I made do on \$14. I wanna tell you ... that added up to a lotta casseroles and pasta creations! I remember one late afternoon, I had just finished cleaning out the refrigerator of some things that had become science experiments, when I got a call from one of my roommates. He was letting me know that he had invited some friends over for supper and to set a few extra places at the table. Click. I shrieked cuz I knew I had nothing in the apartment to feed these people with. I reopened the newly bare fridge ... I found a kielbasa, a coupla carrots and sticks of celery. In the pantry I fished out a few onions and some potatoes. And last, I went to the garbage can and rescued a yellowed head of cabbage that I had just thrown away. A little tearing ... a little slicing ... a little chopping - all into a pot it went with some chicken broth, and voila ... one boiled dinner. The

guests and my roommates all raved about the taste and couldn't understand why I refused to eat any of it myself!!!

Jesus was preaching to thousands of people and it was getting late. They must've been getting hungry, and the Lord's Disciples, who were full of themselves deciding who among them was the greatest, wanted to get rid of that mob of starving people. They told the Lord to wrap things up and send them away ... it was dinner time. Plus they didn't wanna get involved in this ravenous mess. They were coming between Christ and His people.

"What will separate us from the love of Christ? ... famine??"

In this case, what separated hungry people from the love of Christ was the laziness, narrow mindedness, and selfishness of the very people who called themselves the Lord's friends.

St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta worked with poorest of the poor in India and in the streets of cities and slums all over the world. She saw it all ... poverty and disease in all its ugly, desperate forms. Yet, she had pity for the "poverty-stricken West."

"The spiritual poverty of the Western World is much greater than the physical poverty of our people," she said. "You in the West have millions of people who suffer such terrible loneliness and emptiness. They feel unloved and unwanted. These people are not hungry in the physical sense, but they are in another way. They know they need something more than money, yet they don't know what it is. What they are missing really is a living relationship with God."

What will separate people from the love of Christ? Pray it not be the friends of the Lord and our miserly love for Him.