



# Bringing Home the Word

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
July 25, 2021

## Gifts To Be Shared

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The multiplication of the loaves and fish was a scene commonly sculpted on the tombs of Christians in ancient Rome. These early Christians, an ocean away, not only heard the story but believed it and sealed their lives with it. What powerful message of life and death did they find?

Aside from being a symbol of the Eucharist, the center of early Christian worship then as today, this miracle is a call to generosity. By giving your life to Jesus, he can multiply it and raise it up to new life.

Jesus sees the hunger of the crowd

and wants to satisfy them. He asks what provisions they have, and all they can muster is two fish and five loaves. Andrew questions what good that is for so many. Implicit is that it may be better to save what little there is for themselves.

Jesus sees things differently. He gives thanks for the little they have and has the apostles give it away. He knows the Father will multiply this generosity. Rather than look at what they have as a scarcity of goods, he sees them as gifts to share.

This is the radical change of heart that Jesus asks of us. Everything we have is a gift to be shared. When we live in love, and not in selfish fear of how to satisfy ourselves, then God multiplies what little we have and provides everything we need.

When the Gospel declares the apostles had collected twelve baskets of leftovers, the text shouts that God is a God of abundance, not of scarcity. +

*The multiplication of the loaves and fish teaches us that everything we have is a gift to be shared.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

[The Church] is not a fortress but a tent able to enlarge her space and give access to all. Either the Church "goes forth" or she is not a Church; either she is on a journey always widening her space so that everyone can enter, or she is not a Church.

—General Audience, October 23, 2019



## Sunday Readings

### 2 Kings 4:42-44

[Elisha said,] "Thus says the LORD: You will eat and have some left over."

### Ephesians 4:1-6

I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love.

### John 6:1-15

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Am I generous with my time, treasure, and talent?
- Do I multiply what I have by giving it to God and others, allowing him to return it to me twelvefold?

# The Power of “I Don’t Know”

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

I would like to know how a text message gets from one cell phone to another. And how does it get there without getting mixed up with other text messages? Where do text messages go after they are deleted? Is there a “text message landfill” somewhere with old texts, emoticons, and selfies? Is text “air space” unlimited? Are billions of text messages responsible for global warming? The more I think about it, the more I am baffled by the whole thing. For me, this is like asking, “How many angels can stand on the head of pin?” It brings me to the point of saying what I never want to admit: *I don’t know!*

The words of philosopher Maimonides are hard to swallow: “Teach thy tongue to say, ‘I do not know,’ and thou shalt progress.” We do anything and everything to get around the words, “I don’t know.” We fake it, avoid it, pretend, tell lies, talk around it, and do anything but say it. Maybe the drive for power or the need for acceptance or the desire to feel safe keep us from admitting this simple fact. It could simply be the feeling that saying, “I don’t know” is an admission of weakness, perhaps stupidity. No one wants to be seen as weak, lacking in experience or intelligence.

What power in just three words! Teachers have based educational techniques, programs, and plans on these words, helping learners understand that education begins when we get past the illusion that we know it all and surrender



to what we don’t know. The truth is that there is a lot we don’t know. In a world where everything appears to have an explanation or can at least be figured out to some extent, there is still so much more about ourselves, others, the world, and God that goes unexplained or is beyond explanation. So much remains a mystery.

When we surrender to the power of “I don’t know,” the unknown becomes accessible to us. Curiosity is awakened. Curiosity can lead to contemplation, contemplation to understanding, and understanding to mystical experience and the transcendent. Admitting and accepting that we don’t know disposes

us to an experience of mystery and the divine. It’s easy to pray to the God we know and can understand, visualize, and imagine, the God we have grown comfortable with. It’s heroic to admit that we don’t know. This simple admission can unlock doors of knowledge and open us to the revelation of God still unknown. +

*This simple admission  
can unlock doors  
of knowledge and  
open us to God.*

## PRAYER

*Lord, you are the bread  
that satisfies hungry hearts.  
Remove the selfishness  
from my heart, that I may be  
generous to people in need.*

—From *Faithful Meditations for Every Day  
in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

July 26–31

**Monday**, Sts. Joachim and Anne:  
Ex 32:15–24, 30–34 / Mt 13:31–35

**Tuesday**, Weekday:  
Ex 33:7–11; 34:5b–9, 28 / Mt 13:36–43

**Wednesday**, Weekday:  
Ex 34:29–35 / Mt 13:44–46

**Thursday**, St. Martha: Ex 40:16–21, 34–38 /  
Jn 11:19–27 or Lk 10:38–42

**Friday**, Weekday: Lv 23:1, 4–11, 15–16, 27,  
34b–37 / Mt 13:54–58

**Saturday**, St. Ignatius of Loyola:  
Lv 25:1, 8–17 / Mt 14:1–12

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