

As we have just heard in the Gospel it was bread that was taken by Jesus on that hillside as he set about feeding the crowd of five thousand people. His reaction to their need is one of compassion. His multiplication of the loaves shows his power, but it is apparent that that is the least of his concerns. One of the results of his action is that he does show his power over the natural order of things, but when Jesus looks up and sees a large crowd coming toward him, and seeing how little food there was, we can imagine his heart sinking. He knows they are hungry. Immediately he plans to feed them.

Jesus took the five loaves and gave thanks.

This giving thanks to his Father shows how he is not seeking his own glory. All the people are thankful for what Jesus has just done for them. Jesus had done what was necessary for the crowd. Even as he withdraws they

remain the crowd, only their bodily hunger is satisfied by what he has done for them. Who he really is remains unknown to them. Their reaction is to have him crowned as their leader, he is not seen by them as divine. He is not worshipped as the presence of God amongst them. Soon they will hunger for the next meal, and soon they will want to seek out this miracle-maker, this loner, in the mountain again.

When we gather for the Eucharist we gather as God's people, not as God's crowd.

We come together as God's followers to have our deepest needs fulfilled. We

have the desire in our hearts to thank him. We want to make him king in our

hearts. His presence now, as then, remains veiled. With faith we recognize him

in the Eucharist. 'By the consecration of the bread and wine, there takes place

a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of body of

Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of

his blood' (CCC. no. 1376). This food we partake of in the Eucharist is one that

'is crammed with heaven.'

We can't be fully satisfied as God's people who gather week after week for the

bread of life and not feel the crying need of our sisters and brothers who long

for ordinary food.

Because we have received so much of God's good things there is an expectation on his part that we act likewise. When we act out of the love of

God by helping another, whether far away or next-door, it is Jesus again coming

to this people and answering a need.

Jesus is serious about us. He cares about us wherever he finds us scattered.

His coming to us in his body and blood calls each of us to give totally of

ourselves as he gives totally of himself in this Sacrament.

Jesus, too, wants us to 'look up' and to 'catch sight' of the people and

situations he is calling us to help. .