

August 2, 2020

Is 55:1-3; Rom 8:35, 37-39, Mt 14:13-21

We forget how much God is there to help us, to fill us, to feed us - and when we are need we can look to the wrong places for a solution. I know a young man who is just about 30 years old - I have known him since he was a teenager. He was taken from his birth parents, was adopted by a family that he has no contact with, he has often felt rejected and is starved emotionally. He is, however, a warm and loving individual with a big heart who just is so empty inside sometimes. He has tried to fill this emptiness with drugs, with a string of really bad relationships, food, sex, blowing a lot of money on things he didn't need . He even tried to fill this gap with God - imagine that!- but didn't really stick with it. I just spoke to him the other day - he is doing much better - he still talks about God in a distant way, and is still missing the final pieces he needs to be filled.

In our first reading, the prophet says *Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Why do we put our energy into things that won't satisfy?* For my young friend all the food, drugs, sex, trying to get people to like him - all of this does not fully satisfy. There is a depth within us that is meant to be filled by God. And God is willing to do it. We, like he, may try to go the way of God at some point - but not really stick with it - because it doesn't give a quick result. We want fast solutions, and it is hard sometimes to go through the process of building the relationship with God that is needed. But as we know, many good things don't come fast - and it can feel that God is going too slow, but actually is going just the right speed. God is there waiting ... God is there loving. God also says through he prophet: *All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat.* We don't have to try to buy God's love, there is no currency we need to supply, just an openness and the 3effort to build that relationship. God wants us to drink from an endless stream that is life-giving. God wants us to eat from a source of food that is eternal.

What is that food? What is that drink God speaks of? Jesus, who is God among us, gives us a clue in the Gospel today. When all those people come to him he fees them in many ways. They came to him to be filled mentally and spiritually - they were looking for his teaching and healing - and he did not hold back. Look at the scene, he has been teaching for hours, he goes off to be by himself to commune with the Father - a good example to all of us amid the pressures

of life. He has just heard that his beloved cousin John has been killed - no one would fault him with refusing to do more for that day. But just like the prophet said *All you who are thirsty, come to the water!* God doesn't turn away when we come in need. Jesus nourishes them mentally with words of preaching, and nourishes them bodily by multiplying the donations of his disciples. God provides humankind with what we need and then entrusts these gifts to us to distribute as he entrusted the bread and fish to his disciples to distribute. Through the Spirit God has given the Church an understanding of the Divine Revelation, and God provides enough food and resources across the world for everyone if we would share them well. But today we also reflect not the fact that God wants ultimately to fill that deeper longing that we all, including my young friend, often have a hard time filling.

Jesus' action in feeding that crowd foreshadows the Eucharist, where he will give us a food that contains a great treasure. He gives himself. Just like he gave of himself to the people who came to him on the hillside, he gives himself to us in the Eucharist. Just as they were hungering and thirsting for something, so are we. Can we put in the effort to open ourselves to the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist? Can we let him give us a spiritual gift that will help us to begin to be satisfied more deeply? Let's try today. Ask Jesus to help fill your deeper needs. If you have tried before and dropped off - try again - don't be like my friend who tried all the quick things yet was never fed. Be ready to have patience, and stop frantically trying to fill an infinite void without the infinite God.

Once you are able to open to that power, once you open the door for the infinite to fill the void - amazing things can happen. Jesus comes to us with great love as he came to those people in the crowd. If we truly join with him in our hearts and minds, if we truly become part of his Body in service to God and neighbor, if we unite ourselves properly in the Eucharist - nothing can take that away from us. As St. Paul said today: *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* It is only our own self-will and resistance that can stand in the way of Christ that seeks to fill and complete us, and leave us separated from God in eternity. The same love that impelled God to give himself to us in Jesus, is the love that can fully complete us.