

Was Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 really a miracle of sharing?

CATHOLIC ANSWERS STAFF

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Question:

My pastor said in a homily that the biblical account of Jesus feeding the five thousand was not a miracle; instead it was a "miracle of sharing." Is this true?

Answer:

The feeding of the five thousand was a genuine, supernatural miracle that could not have been accomplished by any natural means whatsoever. It was not a "miracle of sharing" or anything similar to that. It was a supernatural event. The Gospels tell us that there were five loaves of bread and two fish, but after Jesus blessed the food, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples who in turn gave them to the crowds, more than enough bread had been supernaturally generated (cf. Mt 14:15–21; 15:32–39).

This miraculous feeding is a foreshadowing of the miraculous feeding of the Eucharist. We read in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that "the miracles of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessing, breaks and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigure the superabundance of this unique bread of his Eucharist" (CCC 1335). We also see a connection between the miraculous feeding of the five thousand and the Eucharist in John 6, where we read that Jesus gave his first public teaching on the Lord's Supper immediately after the feeding of the five thousand. This supernatural event prefigured the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, in which "all who eat the one broken bread, Christ, enter into communion with him and form but one body in him" (CCC 1329).