

2021 July 25

## Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Reading:

**First:** 2 Kings 4.42-44, "Thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have some left'." (43c)

**The Psalm:** 145, "You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing." (16)

**Second:** Ephesians 4.16, "There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope." (4)

**The Gospel:** John 6.1-15, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish." (9a)

### **God needs your mite to be Mighty!**

In today's scripture readings there are two feedings, Prophet Elisha feeds over one hundred people with just twenty loaves of barley bread given by a farmer friend from his first produce, who knew that the prophet had no food. The people in the locality were suffering from a severe famine. The prophet ordered these loaves to be given to them, which were too small a portion to feed such a crowd of over a hundred. However, by the word of the prophet God multiplies the loaves and feeds all leaving some left-over! Similarly, Jesus feeds over five thousand people with five loaves of barley bread and two small fish, which was all that a little boy's mom had packed for his lunch. The leftover was twelve baskets full.

The prophet and Jesus needed the little mite of the little people to provide for the great needs of the multitudes. This is precisely God's invitation to each of us today, to be partners with him. He necessarily needs our insignificant mite to feed, shepherd, and gather the peoples of the world today, "*To make them into one body and one Spirit, calling together into the one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.*" (Ephesians 4.4-6)

An interesting action was that Jesus ordered the disciples to gather the left over. We are inclined to think, or question why should they gather the left over? Jesus could multiply bread again '*even out of the stones,*' as the devil prompted him in the temptations. The answer is that God intervenes and responds not to the greed, but to the needs of the people, and we are never to be ungrateful to the provident God by squandering or destroying his bounty. The leftover is not for destroying but for further use to feed the hungry; sometimes for us to count and wonder at the bounty of God.

Coming back to the day's stories, if the farmer friend of prophet Elisha and the little boy with the five loaves were to withhold what they had, thinking that it was so little, or that they might go starving if they parted with it, these miracles would never have happened. Jesus sends us on a mission on his behalf to proclaim the good news to the ends of the earth to nourish, heal, and baptize all. This is all about Christianity. If we are inclined to think about our smallness and insignificance, this mission will not be accomplished. Where in the world have I the faith for this impossible task, or where do I have the learning, the eloquence, the power, etc., to be on this mission, we may think? The answer is, "*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" (Matthew 28.20) The only thing demanded of us is the response Mary gave to the angel, "*Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.*" (Luke 1.38) God is looking for people who dare to give this answer. The rest will be the same stories repeated, which will be the business of God.