



In the first reading (2 Kings 4:42-44) a man from Baalshalishah brings 20 barley loaves and fresh grain in the ear to Elisha. Elisha told him to give it to the hundred people who were there. The man objected saying that it would not be enough. Elisha prophesized that God said it would be enough with some left over. And so it was.

Something to Think About:

1. Elisha was the main prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel during the ninth century B.C. after he had succeeded Elijah. Both men had to contend with the foreign born Queen Jezebel who was trying to make her god Baal the god of Israel. At the time in question there has been a great famine in the land and at the time of the spring harvest a man from that area brings 20 barley loaves. It was at the time of the Passover, and he probably meant it to be an offering to the Lord for His graciousness for the harvest. It was a reminder of how God had provided manna in the desert of the people of Israel during their journey to the promised land. Because of the great hunger people were experiencing Elisha directed that it be given to a group of 100 people. Contrary to the man's opinion and it was insufficient to feed them, Elisha prophesized that there would be leftovers. The fact that there were leftovers was a sign that Elisha indeed represented God to the people. We will see the same sequence in the gospel: food is brought to a man of God, someone protests it is impossible, a large number of people are fed with a small amount of food, the food is bread, the people are filled, and there is left over bread.

2. The Church presents this story of Elisha's prophesy of the adequacy of 20 barley loaves to feed 100 priests as a type of the more miraculous miracle that Jesus would perform for 5000 men plus women and children. Most often the stories of God's interaction with mankind in the Old Testament have similarities of even greater miracles in the New Testament. This is a way of showing that Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises to mankind. He is the one that we need to listen to and emulate.

3. When we share what we have God will always make it sufficient for all. Mother Teresa is quoted as saying, "If you can't feed one hundred people, just feed 'the one.'" She was also a proponent that it is not what we do but the love with which we do it that is important. What simple act of charity do I hear God calling me to do? Will I say "Yes!"" When will I begin?

In the second reading (Ephesians 4:1-6) the author of Ephesians tells them to live in a manner worthy of their calling, with humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, and striving to preserve unity. For they were all called to the same hope: i.e. one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

Something to Think About:

1. Three weeks ago we hear Paul say that God told him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." Just as God's grace enabled Paul to withstand the various imprisonments that he suffered for the sake of his ministry, so would grace enable the converts whom Paul had brought to Christ be enabled to live in a manner worthy of their calling. The truest expression of that calling would be characterized by the unity of their community, regardless of their differences. In America lately diversity has taken its toll on unity. It should not be so for Christians. We are made in the image and likeness of God, members of one Body of Christ, and share in the hope for one eternal destiny. These things are much more important than the things that draw us apart. Perhaps the next time we may want to talk about "those people" we might remember the reasons we are more importantly alike than different.

2. The Greek word for humility had a connotation of weakness and so Christians had to develop a whole new word. Christian humility is not weak or soft. To practice humility, we must be aware of our whole self, warts and all. When we measure ourselves, it is not against our fellow man but against Jesus Christ. The letter to the Philippians tells us that although He was God, He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather He emptied Himself, even dying on a cross. With whom do I compare myself? If I judge myself to be superior, I am looking in the wrong places.

3. Gentleness does not mean that we will not become angry when we see evil. Jesus became angry when He encountered hypocrisy and the money changers who exploited the poor. The virtue of gentleness does not allow us to fail to do something about injustice in our world. For what reasons do I become angry? Would Jesus be angry for the same reasons?

4. Patience is a virtue best exemplified by God who does not justifiably destroy mankind for its failure to do His will. We are called to imitate God in our dealings with others by refraining from revenge, by being tolerant with

fools and by avoiding a “get even” attitude. This means that we go outside our own self-interests to love others. Do I have a heart of empathy that moves me to action?

In the Gospel (Jn 6:1-15) a large crowd follows Jesus because of the signs he was working. He asks Philip where can we buy food for them to eat? Philip responds that not even two hundred days wages would be enough to feed them. Andrew tells Jesus that there was a boy there with five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus had the 5,000 men sit down. Jesus then takes the loaves, gives thanks and distributes them along with the fish. They ate till they were full. Afterward Jesus sends the disciples to gather 12 wicker baskets of leftovers. The people recognized Jesus as a prophet. Jesus then needs to withdraw to the mountain to be alone because they were going to make Him king. Something to Think About:

1. If I were present to witness this miracle, what would have been my reaction? Would I be in awe of the power of God shown in the actions of Jesus and want to follow Him? Would I have wanted to make him king so that I would no longer have to work for my bread? When have I experienced God’s magnificence generosity? Have I ever not been satisfied by God? If I felt that way at the time, do I still feel that way in retrospect?

2. In the Gospel of John there is no mention of Jesus’ institution of the Eucharist at the final meal Jesus had with his disciples. Scholars, however, point to this sign (miracle) as indicative of John’s understanding of the meaning of Eucharist. Here Jesus satisfied the physical hunger of the 5,000 men. He continues to satisfy my deepest hunger in the Eucharist. Do I approach the Eucharist at mass with a hunger for God’s love? Do I recognize that He is the miracle worker and can make me whole? Do I recognize that He can work a miracle in me if I let Him? Do I desire to become what I eat?

3. Do I approach the Eucharist with the attention it deserves? Do I bow before receiving in deference to what I am about to receive? Do I reverently make a throne with my hands to receive the King of Heaven? Do I desire to become what I consume? Do I appreciate that I am sharing in the very immortality of God, who with my cooperation is making me immortal? Do I appreciate that I am receiving every actual grace I should ever need to become the person God wants me to be? Do I pray to Jesus after receiving Him? Am I grateful for what I am becoming? How do I show it?

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