

18th Sunday homily A Cycle 8-2-14

Arise Detroit:

Recently the City of Detroit challenged people who live near parks to hold programs for their communities on August 2. They called the effort Arise Detroit.

Our local park, O'Hair Park wanted to have some activities in our park. O'Hair Park Community Organization began to dream of what we could do at the park located at the park located directly behind the parking lot of the church. Immediately we began to be overwhelmed at the task. We lacked the resources to put on a program. There was not enough time to get outside resources

But then we started to look at what gifts we actually have.

We invited block clubs and organizations within the square mile to give what little they had.

- One block club said they could possibly show a movie in the park at night.**
- Another block club said they could have games for young children.**
- Then someone offered to do face painting.**
- Another person contacted the Detroit police just to have them be aware of the event and they said they would send the mounted unit out for the children to see the horses.**

- **The PAL football teams said they could hold a scrimmage game.**
- **Barbara Sylvester and her daughter would hold a cake tasting event**
- **The Glastonbury Block Club committed themselves to hold a bicycle clinic which would include a bicycle decorating contest, obstacle course and a bicycle parade**
- **Northwest Detroit Youth Coalition would sell hot dogs and lemonade for ten cents**

We moved emotionally from the being overwhelmed and despairing to a community celebrating life together.

I tell this story because the same challenge which the O’Hair Park Community Association was faced by the followers of Jesus faced in today’s gospel. Jesus and the disciples were out in a deserted place. A crowd was following Jesus and listening to his good news.

Jesus’ disciples were good event planners. They realized that this large group was getting hungry. They approached Jesus and said, “We don’t have enough resources to feed them. We need outside resources. Send them away into the villages to buy food.”

But Jesus asked them to refocus their efforts.

“What DO you have?”

“Just a few loaves and a few fish, but what is that for so many?”

Jesus realized that all we have is a gift from God.

He took ahold of the little they had and gave thanks to God.

Then he began to hand it out.

Jesus did not avoid the challenges of life.

He did not live in fear.

He realized that EVERYTHING we have is a gift from God.

He began by taking the little that he had and gave thanks.

Then he broke it and shared it with the crowd.

Scripture tells us that they had an abundance, MORE than enough for the crowd of 5,000.

How do we face our problems in life?

Do we try to develop a strategy?

Do we live in fear?

Do we lack the resources needed for the challenge in front of us?

Or do we face our challenges as Jesus suggests.

Do we look at what we have, no matter how little it is, as a gift from God?

Do we invite others around us to embrace the challenge and share what they have?

Do we then give thanks for what we have and generously share it with others?

Jesus radical trust in his Father allowed him to overcome all the challenges and obstacles of life,

Even suffering and death. Jesus invites us to overcome our fears and challenges. He invites us to form communities where we can share the little we have and work together to face whatever challenges we have in our homes, neighborhood and world.

My brothers and sisters, we gather as a people of faith, a lively faith which Jesus challenges us to face the obstacles in or daily life. May we who gather to give thanks to God not live in fear and be tempted to despair. Rather, let us take the little we have, allow God to bless it, and then go about the work of sharing his good news in our words and deeds.