

August 2, 2020

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 55:1-3

Rom 8:35, 37-39

Mt 14:13-21

GROW: Our neighborhood store is old-school: The baggers carry out our groceries. Often, I gladly accept, but if I think I can handle, say, two gallons of milk, two paper bags with canned goods and an extra carton of eggs, I'll mutter, "No thanks" and struggle my way to the car. I think we Catholics, especially the American variety, are a little like that. We like our baggage, and we often choose to carry it alone, even when every muscle is straining with the effort. We're quick to offer to pray for others, but hesitant to ask others to pray for us. We may stumble through the most recent translation of the creed, but we took to the "I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof" language right away. We tended to stay at least six feet away from others at Mass before social distancing became a thing. That's why I love the way today's readings show us the many ways God loves us, in his abundant generosity. He always provides, and we don't need to carry our burdens alone.

GO: When entertaining, I often worry I won't have enough food to go around. Several years ago, I had a large party and loaded up on ribs and chicken. I was sure I was fully prepared, so imagine my horror when five or six of my friends approached the buffet table to find only a couple of chicken wings and a rib left.* So I get why the Apostles told Jesus they didn't think five loaves and two fish would cut it!

Today's Gospel challenges us to trust in God's abundant generosity, and to share the burdens we face. How might that look in our daily lives? And what can we do better? In practical terms, it could mean that we ask for God's help in providing hospitality to others when they need it, and look for the many places in which God's provisions for us are visible. Or, as the twelve disciples handed out food to 5000 men, plus women and children, we might pray for the grace to offer help to another in the face of a daunting task. The possibilities are endless. How will we meet this Gospel's challenge?

*As to the chicken and ribs, the joke was on me: I discovered them the next morning in the oven!

Pray

Lord, Jesus Christ, I give you my entire self now and forever. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Teach me to know the Father and to accept his abundant generosity. Strengthen me each day in listening to and following your will. Amen.