

*And he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them*

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The Trinity season calls us to grow deeper into the Life of Christ as we strive to become more mature Christians. In this season we are invited to take a closer look at Jesus, at his Life, at His teachings and at His miracles. Within these lessons the nature of God and His expectations for us as His followers and worshippers are revealed. God has called us into His Kingdom, He has washed us in the waters of Baptism, He expects us to live a life marked by His Life. He wants us to imitate Him, to learn virtues which He has commanded and exemplified through His Incarnation; especially of mercy, forgiveness and charity which we heard in last week's Gospel. We are each called to be God's servants, to serve Him truly, keeping the true religion of the Catholic faith all the days of our lives. And so, as we are God's servants, God teaches us during this season of our obligation to God, and of God's relationship to us.

We hear in today's Gospel that Our Blessed Lord is again compassionate and merciful to the great multitude that have come to hear Him, to hear the words of eternal life. Our Lord rewards this great crowd of followers and listeners with a miracle, which as C. S. Lewis writes, is *an interference with nature by supernatural power*. Our Lord was tempted by Satan to work a miracle in a different situation when He was tempted to do the unnatural, to make stones into bread, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word from God*. Yet for this multitude our Lord works supernaturally upon the natural. He takes bread and multiplies it, just as a farmer takes one grain of wheat and multiplies it into many grains of wheat. And so along with multiplying the loaves of bread, our Blessed Lord takes the seeds of the Gospel and plants it into the hearts of the multitude now turning hearts *of stone into bread, the bread of fleshly hearts ready to receive His truth*.

Our Lord multiplies the loaves of bread to feed the hungry crowd. They are rewarded for having their spiritual hunger fed. But perhaps some came out just to get a free meal. This is not the first multiplying miracle that Jesus has performed. He has performed this miracle, multiplying loaves and fish on Jewish soil and on Gentile soil. The Jews know exactly what it means for Jesus to be able to multiply loaves and fish for them all to eat. Perhaps while the Disciples distributed the meal, some were reminded of the stories passed down from generation to generation of the Exodus and how God fed their ancestors in the wilderness with manna and quail from heaven. They had heard that the manna and quail had fallen from heaven to earth and covered the ground like dew, and each person, man, woman and child,

had their fill. In witnessing this miracle, Jesus proves to them that He is the very same God who led the Israelites out of Egypt, He is the very same God who fed them with manna from heaven. One would think that their response to this miracle would be to stone Jesus, but it is hard to cast *stones* in the face of such overwhelming power and glory, and with full stomachs.

Jesus again answers the Jews, and shows the Gentiles, God can indeed provide our every need. Psalm 78 records the complaining of the Israelites in the wilderness, *Our God is a great general, He can overthrow Pharaoh's army and drown His chariots in the Red Sea, He can part the sea and make us all to walk across on dry ground, He can lead us through the wilderness with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire, but can God feed us? God struck the stony rock in the wilderness and water came forth but can God give His people bread? Can God provide for His people?* Jesus reminds them and us this morning, *I can indeed provide for you and I can do much more than multiply loaves of bread.* Shortly after this miracle the crowds find Jesus and come to Him again for more physical bread. Can you blame them? Poor people seeking a free meal. The request to work this miracle a third time though was perhaps the only miracle that Jesus refused to perform. He refuses to give bread a third time because He has desired to offer them something of much greater substance, Himself. Jesus tells them *I am the bread of Life, I am the bread which came down from heaven. If you eat of this bread you shall have Everlasting Life.*

We were not present at the feeding of the multitudes, and yet we are taught that Jesus has prepared and ordained a miracle for us this morning. He has not prepared for us thousands of loaves of bread but His very self, the Bread of Heaven. This Bread that we shall eat is far better than the bread he multiplied so many years ago. This bread has even greater power and potency than anything that our finest bakeries can produce. Our Lord says to us, *you desire to be my servants, you desire to follow me, you must eat me, you must eat this bread from heaven which I give freely to you.* This bread is not intended to satisfy physical hunger, it satisfies spiritual hunger in the souls which seek this bread from heaven. It is not intended to sustain a physical and worldly, or earthy life, it is intended to sustain everlasting life, to help us as we live into eternity.

Today the bread has become the seed. The bread of heaven, the seeds of the Gospel and of eternal life which our Lord desires to graft into our hearts is now offered to us. He desires to nourish us with this new bread, this new manna from heaven. Can God provide? Can he give bread to His people? Yes, He has proven that He can provide physically for His children. But most importantly He provides to

those who seek Him something far better. Let us not lose our hunger for this spiritual bread, this bread of heaven. Amen.