

St Pius & St Anthony Corpus Christi Sunday Year C (2025) Luke

What a harvest! Not just the loaves & fish being multiplied, I also mean we see a great harvest of the apostles' mission in today's gospel! The people seeking Jesus multiply, too. The backdrop to this reading, Luke chapter 9 here, began by Jesus sending out the 12 apostles on mission as advance teams to plant interest about the kingdom of God, promoting Jesus' teaching to everyone (Lk 9:1-6). After the mission, Jesus had invited the apostles to come away and rest, take a break and debrief (Lk 9:10). Then suddenly over 5,000 people flock to be around Jesus. I'd say this turnout of folks to see & hear Jesus, means that the apostles did a tremendously good job inviting-recruiting people to seek Jesus & His Kingdom!

What does Jesus do? He teaches further, all day, about the Kingdom, and touches many of them with healing (It sounds like a type of healing & education fair held on a hillside). As the sunset draws near, the apostles sense a concerning issue - Oh, oh - people have been out here all day, they are tired & hungry now, so we better close up shop now, or this crowd may turn on us! The apostles' suggest to Jesus that they be SENT away dismissed to go find something to eat. Yet, Jesus is the one who turns on them and says, ***"Give them some food yourselves"*** (Lk 9:13). A challenge is laid down for them, "You do it." When I hear Jesus say that, I hear my dad one time, like one time, when we were working on my grandad's farm together, dad throwing the keys to me and saying, "Bring the truck around to pick us all up." A surprise empowerment or vote of confidence. How many times I wanted to drive and even nagged him to pull the truck out of garage-back down driveway to save him time, but was told no. Yet, this day he put it on me – just throwing keys to me! Now what? All the way across the field? Will it start okay? Can I do it? I hear the apostles having a similar 'self-questioning moment' of frozen awe – "What, Jesus? You want us to feed all of these people? How do we?" Now I do give the apostles credit for at least inventorying their resources,--five loaves and two fish are all they can round up---I wonder though, if that would have even been enough to feed themselves-their own dinner?) But that is it-they are dismissive and rejecting of this call-up by Jesus, saying, "there's no way we can feed all of this crowd---could we even buy on credit this much food, or would the town market even have that much supply stock?" And so, I love how this miracle is as much ***for the apostles*** as it is for the whole crowd of 5,000. Remember what Jesus told them "Give them some food ***yourselves.***" Hear that as "Give them the food of yourselves" Feed them you - Show them You-show them your trust-feed them your faith! (Like when they were on mission Jesus sent them out without any supplies - no money, no bag, no staff or sandals) and look at what they brought in by faith.) Share with them your faith, (God can do this) and Jesus directs them to have the crowds group down into smaller more manageable units – like from the army brigade size of 5,000, down into smaller platoon-troop sizes

of 50 each. Then Jesus takes what they have brought to him (recall that they were the ones who drew the crowds in to begin with by their advance invitational mission). Jesus had been already satisfying the great crowds by his all day teaching & healing. But then, He takes it, blesses it, breaks it and gives it back to the apostles to give to the people (Luke 9:16 “gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd”). Notice those four action verbs ‘he took, blessed, broke & gave’. Those same four action verbs we hear in every mass during the consecratory words of the Eucharistic Prayer – the same four verbs Jesus uses at the Last Supper-First Mass are the same ones used in this multiplication of loaves and fishes, all recorded by Luke, and Matthew, Mark and Paul. What is up with this, but that Jesus is tying his ongoing possible feeding of everyone through the ministry of His apostles. Jesus is building, feeding stronger faith among His own through this act of empowering them to bring to Him what they have (offer it) and He will multiply it to fulfill needs and satisfy hunger.

But Jesus does satisfy! He feeds the multitudes here, yet also further trains the apostles in trust of Him and making the kingdom present, sharing freely what God has given them, and when they offer their gift in further service of Him, God will multiply and grow it even more for His Kingdom. We hear Jesus put this challenge to us in every Eucharistic Prayer when He tells us “Do this in memory of me.” Do THIS, yes refers to the ritual prayer, but also the servant action of ‘giving one’s life’ as gift-service, sacrifice for the feeding of others. I feed you to feed others, as in the miracle, Jesus gives to the apostles and they give to the crowds. That Jesus was doing this miraculous multiplication FOR the apostles too, can be seen in the leftovers. Recall that Luke tells us that everyone in the crowd was ‘satisfied’. All were filled-Luke 9:17. I get the impression of a smorgasbord or buffet-feel to this Jesus meal – with the apostles hosting tables, circling back to groups offering baskets of seconds or thirds, like the PassArrounds at Lambert’s Café, or when I was kid I remember so well the ‘all you can eat’ dining experience at the first of its kind restaurant chain, the ‘King’s Table’. Plenty for everyone! And leftover, was still 12 baskets full (one for each apostle as a starter dough of friendship bread for his own ministry to further spread the good work ministry in Jesus’ Name-His Kingdom! Jesus feeds the faith of His own to empower us to do as He did, to give as He gave to us, to feed others as He feeds us.

Yet I want to emphasize another aspect to this miracle too, focusing on the goodness of being together. Over 5,000 were fed by Jesus here, and how remarkable that it was a scene of ‘all being satisfied’ (Lk 9:17) Not just fed but satisfied. We can all get a little antsy when it seems like other tables around us are being served in a restaurant, and we are not yet (‘Didn’t we order before them?’ we wonder...) And this is a group of 5,000! What a marvel of this massive food distribution in peace – ‘all satisfied’! It is the presence of Jesus that pulls that off –

Him just being there creates that calm cooperative atmosphere. I'm thinking that everyone has the experience that I often get told by grandmothers/grandfathers after their big family dinners and reunions. Let's say that I ask them, "How did your all's Christmas dinner go-I imagine the family recipes/homemade dishes were so good?" And always, I hear back from them, "Oh father, the food was good, but I was just so happy just getting everybody together again....seeing everyone together, it fed my heart!" Jesus' presence in Eucharist does that! What a gift that we have this feeding at every mass, everywhere, anytime it is celebrated. Jesus provides for our needs, bringing us together, making bread of Himself to feed us all. And He asks us to 'Give them some food'=**Yourselves** We are called to share what has been given us, to feed others as we have been fed.