

JANUARY REFLECTION 2020

Jesus Feeds 5000 Plus Women and Children

Invocation *(Make the sign of the cross as the leader prays the invocation.)*

Leader: + Lord, open my lips.

All: ***And my mouth shall declare your praise.***

Psalm 103 *(Pray antiphonally.)*

Bless the LORD, my soul;

all my being, bless his holy name!

Bless the LORD, my soul;

and do not forget all his gifts,

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,

slow to anger, abounding in mercy.

He will not always accuse,

and nurses no lasting anger;

He has not dealt with us as our sins merit,

nor requited us as our wrongs deserve.

For as the heavens tower over the earth,

so his mercy towers over those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west,

so far has he removed our sins from us.

The LORD has set his throne in heaven;

his dominion extends over all.

Bless the LORD, all his creatures,

everywhere in his domain.

Bless the LORD, my soul!

Scripture *After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near. When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little bit." One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people recline." Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat. When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world." Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.*

John 6:1-15

(Pause for a few moments to meditate on the reading before sharing the reflection.)

Reflection *When Jesus tests the disciples, Philip scoffs at the idea that they can buy the food, looking at the enormity of the crowd. Andrew looks at the offering and despairs at the prospect of going out into the crowd with it. The disciples focus on the impossibility of the task and give in to anxiety and defeat.*

Jesus, however, uses this to teach important lessons, not just to the disciples but to all of us. He takes the offerings, blesses them, and they become enough to feed the multitudes with plenty to spare at the end.

In the end, the anxiety does nothing to improve the situation. In fact, it gets in the way, and reduces our ability to act in faith to the Lord.

We are called to feed others as well as feeding ourselves, to clothe others as well as ourselves, and so on. But giving in to anxiety and despair paralyzes us so that we can't do any of those tasks. We have no faith, we have no hope, and then we have no will or strength to act. Every potential action is preceded with fear, the fear produces hesitation, the hesitation becomes a stall, and so on. We don't feed the multitudes, and eventually we can't deal with our personal responsibilities, either.

Instead, Jesus calls us to rely on Him, to put our trust in Him, especially when it comes to doing His work. We may look at the poverty and inhumanity of this world and want to give up. How can we possibly feed the world with just a few loaves of bread and what we've gathered for the local foodshelf? How can we clothe the world from just a few hand-me-downs? How can we evangelize the Good News in a world obsessed with materialism and hate? We cannot, on our own, do those tasks, especially not with the meager offerings we bring. But Jesus Christ takes those offerings, blesses them, and multiplies them in ways we cannot comprehend nor even see — especially if our anxiety and despair have closed our eyes and our hearts to Him.

This is our salvation — to have faith in Christ, hope in His resurrection, and caritas for our neighbors as ourselves. “Do not be anxious about tomorrow,” He said, “for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.” Live in the Multiplication, and put aside the worries of division.

<https://hotair.com/archives/ed-morrissey/2015/07/26/sunday-reflection-john-61-15/>

Prayer ***Lord, in this quiet moment I am having to face the same issue that these people faced long ago: Is Jesus to be King or simply a politician to be manipulated at my beck and call? Help me to crown him King, to be ready to follow that he may indeed minister through me, so that I may respond with thankful expectation to this command to feed the multitude around me who hunger for the delivering Word of life. Amen.***

<https://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/john/the-testing-of-faith>

Sign of the Cross

