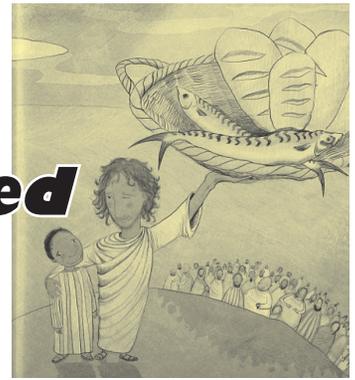


Bread and Spirit-Fed



Jesus feeds the five thousand.

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (2 Kgs 4:42-44)

⁴²A man came from Baal-shalishah bringing the man of God twenty barley loaves made from the first fruits, and fresh grain in the ear. Elisha said, “Give it to the people **to eat**.” ⁴³But his servant objected, “How can I set this before a hundred?” Elisha again said, “Give it to the people **to eat**, for thus says the LORD: You **will eat** and have some left over.” ⁴⁴He set it before them, and when they **had eaten**, they had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.

THE FOCUS: Feeding a Hungry Crowd

REFLECTIONS

God takes care of his people in times of crisis (of need). Only that we listen to his voice: to distribute what is available.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 145:10-18)

THE HAND OF THE LORD FEEDS US;
HE ANSWERS ALL OUR NEEDS.

SECOND READING (Eph 4:1-6)

^{1*} I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, ^{2b}with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, ^{3c}striving to preserve the **unity** of the spirit through the bond of peace: ^{4*} **one body and one Spirit**, as you were also called to the **one** hope of your call; ^{5e}**one Lord, one**

faith, one baptism; ^{6f}**one God and Father** of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

THE FOCUS: Unity of Christians

COMMENTARY

- The author (*not Paul, according to scholars, but an avid follower, putting himself into Paul's shoes*) exhorts the Christians in Ephesus to preserve unity (v.3).
- There are many reasons for this:
 - One body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.
 - Living in a manner worthy of Christian vocation = living in unity.

REFLECTIONS

Christian vocation demands certain qualities and behaviors (*humble, gentle, patient, etc.*).

Christians living in community are asked to preserve unity among themselves. Unity reflects the oneness and integrity of God.

GOSPEL READING (Jn 6:1-15)

Setting

^{1*} ^a After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee [of Tiberias]. ^{2*} A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. ³ Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. ^{4b} The Jewish feast of **Passover** was near.

Philip tested and his questioning

^{5*} “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**?” ^{6*} He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. ^{7d} Philip answered him, “Two hundred days’ wages* worth of **food** would not be enough for each of them to have a little [bit].”

Andrew’s information and questioning

⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, ^{9e} “There is a boy here who has five **barley loaves*** and two **fish**; but what good are these for so many?”

Jesus performs miracles

^{10f} 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. ^{11g} 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. ¹² When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, “Gather the **fragments** left over, so that nothing will be wasted.” ¹³ So they collected **them**, and filled twelve wicker baskets* with fragments from the five **barley loaves** that had been more than they could **eat**.

People’s response

^{14h} 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.”

Jesus’ reaction

¹⁵ⁱ Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.

THE FOCUS: Food (Feeding)

COMMENTARY

- The text is in Book of Signs, chs 1-12.
- We may call this a miracle of the multiplication, author would prefer to call it sign (*semeion*). See v.2.

- Sea of Galilee = Sea of Tiberias or Lake Galilee, much smaller than Laguna Lake.
- The timing is sometime in March-April.
- Jesus tests Philip: Where to buy food for the large crowd? Philip feels helpless. Even if they have a hefty amount of money, it is not simply enough. No one will be satisfied (*bitin*). (In the first place, why should it be their problem? People must be responsible for themselves.)
- Andrew has the same worry. Five barley loaves and two fish are simply not enough.
- Philip and Andrew are correct in their questioning, from their own point of view.
- Jesus feeds the hungry crowd with a little resource.
- V.11 echoes the eucharistic formula at the Last Supper, which was done during the Jewish Passover.
- The evangelist puts the eucharistic formula here, not at the Last Supper, unlike the synoptics.
- We should not ask about how Jesus did it, because there are a lot of answers. No need to speculate; just be open to possibilities.
- We just accept the fact of the story that the hungry crowds eat their fill (contrary to the fear of Philip and Andrew who believed “not enough” and there is even extra.
- In v.14, people understand the meaning of the sign (miracle). They see Jesus as a prophet, promised by God.
- But of course, they are mistaken in its implication (they want him to be political king, political leader).
- Their concept of king would be like that of the Hasmoneans who successfully fought against the Hellenists or of Herodian dynasty backed by the Romans.
- When the gospel was written, there was no more Israelite king.
- The Romans through the procurators were in total control of the land of Israel.

REFLECTIONS

The feeding is a bonus for those who are following Jesus. They are following because of his words and healing power. Now they are fed and are satisfied bodily.

The feeding is a symbolic reminder of the total availability of Jesus to those who participate in the eucharist.

In the eucharist, no one goes home hungry and unsatisfied.

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

Elisha feeds the hungry crowd with meager resource. God intervened (First Reading).

The author of the Ephesians encourages Christians to preserve unity. There is no explicit remark about food. Let us imagine that one way to preserve unity is to make food available for meals and eucharist (Second Reading).

Jesus feeds the hungry throng with meager resource like Elisha (Gospel Reading).

Suggestion for the Homily

Begin by talking your experience about your (or people's) hunger (due to poverty, no work, low salary, etc.) which you have personally seen.

Then talk about God's will: God does not will that one will go hungry. Something must be done. 1) In the First Reading, Elisha commands a man to cooperate in his plan laid out by God. 2) The Second Reading promotes unity which implies egalitarianism or justice and just distribution of goods. 3) The Gospel portrays Jesus as knowing what to do with the crowd. He does not send them away, but performs a miracle.

We may not be wonder workers like Elisha and Jesus, but our communities are urged to take care of the hungry. Here, enters the subject on social justice. Christians should not allow any one to go hungry, if we really care. They must be on the look out who is not having enough.

Parishioners should support the feeding programs and livelihood projects.

People must be taught what to eat also; so much money is wasted on junk and fancy food and drink. (*Learn the correct diet*). Some people devour a lot of food; others do not have enough.

End homily by relating the theme to the eucharist. In the eucharist, Jesus comes to us once again to feed us with his own body and blood in the forms of bread and wine. The amount may be small, but it is enough for all of us. The eucharist challenges us to share also ourselves to others, no matter how small, untalented, and poor as we are. What matters is the token of generosity and solidarity.

-Prepared by Fr. Cielo Almazan, OFM

III. OUR CONTEXT

1. Today is Fil-Mission Sunday. Pray for our missionaries who are actively propagating the faith all over the world.
2. How do we become missionaries in our own parish?
3. Our eucharistic fellowships should make us more conscious of the hunger around us. How do we alleviate the hunger Filipinos feel? (HM)