**Homily** **for the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

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        What a great story! Jesus feeding the five thousand. Somehow, it is too much. A small amount of food became a huge amount of food for the hungry in God’s mystery. Jesus was no showman. Christ did not do this kind of big-stage, major production. Most often, when He worked a miracle, Jesus said, “don’t tell anyone.” So, we say it’s a wonderful miracle. Such a nice thing for Christ to do.

        How can five bread and two fish feed five thousands people while leaving twelve baskets of leftovers?

        This miracle is a story of plenty, a story of responding to human need, and a story of sharing. Let’s look at some details about the story. Figure out exactly what’s going on. As we closely read this story, we realize we are being told quite a bit.

        First, the number. Five thousand was a symbolic number, used to designate all of the Jewish people and Gentiles. In other words, the story tells us, everyone was there. All people, from everywhere, gather around Jesus. Jesus feeds Jews and Gentiles, and all people.

        A second point about this wonderful meal, God gives more than enough. Food was aplenty. When everyone had eaten their fill, they collected twelve baskets of leftovers. God satisfies the hunger of His people with an abundance. This miracle shows the remarkable generosity of God and His great kindness towards us. When God gives, He gives abundantly. He gives more than we need for ourselves so that we may have something to share with others, especially those who lack what they need. God takes the little we have and multiplies it for the good of others.

        Then, a third point. Where this food came from? A little boy had five loaves and two fish. This little food was very important for the boy to survive. But, this little boy gave up his food for Jesus to share it with others. In this situation, it would be very tempting to hold on. If the boy or someone would have thought, “I cannot share this little food with others, I’m gonna keep this for myself,” the bread would be not enough for the people. There was no selfishness there. They shared all they had, and finally, all were satisfied. In the same way, there is no place for selfishness in our ministry of the Church. We are called to share what we have with others. So, this miracle is about sharing, sharing of God’s love.

        And, next point. The Gospel says, “Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them.” In Mass, in the Eucharistic prayer, we hear, “He took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples.” In the early Church, this words were spoken during the Mass. And until now, we use the same words when we celebrate Mass.

        This supernatural food is healing for both body and soul and strength for their journey to follow Jesus. This sign of the multiplication of the bread prefigures the superabundance of the Bread of Life in the Holy Eucharist. The Bread of Life in the Eucharist is healing for body and soul and strength for our journey to the Kingdom of God.

        And, a last point. The multiplication of the bread reminds us for our ministry of the Church. Jesus sends His disciples to distribute the bread of life to the hungry. Jesus ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, He gave the food to His disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. Jesus gave the mission to His disciples for the hungry to distribute and share His love. That is also our mission today. We have to distribute and share the Bread of Life and God’s love and mercy to the needy.

        Do you believe in miracles? Yes, of course. In loving and sharing with each other, miracles can happen!

        When Jesus saw the vast crowd, His heart was moved with pity for them because they have nothing to eat. He acted with compassion to the hungry. People were like sheep without a shepherd. He wanted to share His love as a Good Shepherd. So, Jesus Himself provides bread in abundance for the hungry crowd.

        Now, we are small, but we will become the bread of life for the people of God. Jesus says to us today, “Go and share with them because they are hungry.”