

Dear Parishioners:

The crowds in today's gospel found themselves in a place where some unfavorable conditions existed. They were at a deserted place. It was evening. They must've been tired, hungry, and out of food. Since it was a deserted place, they could not find accommodations and meals nearby. A mere thought of walking a long distance to go home must have caused them to worry.

Perhaps, we are in the same sorry plight. We seem to be in a deserted place and it is getting dark. We feel weary and starving because of the challenges and difficulties we face in our lives. We may be in a situation that we don't want to get accustomed to, and be full of anxieties and concerns. We may be exhausted and don't even want to think about how long we will have to live like this.

What are the messages of consolation and hope that we can get from the miracle of multiplication of loaves and fish? First of all, the fact that Jesus' heart is moved with pity for us gives us consolation and hope as He was moved with pity for the crowds in the gospel. Even if no one understands us or be a friend with us, we should never forget that Jesus is moved with compassion for each one of us.

Secondly, Jesus cured the sick and satisfied the hunger of the crowd with the miracle. Our Lord takes care of our specific needs. The Lord answers all our needs though not the way we want but His way and in His time. The fact that Jesus' love for us is expressed in a concrete and practical manner gives us hope and consolation.

Thirdly, everyone in the crowd ate and were satisfied. No one is excluded from the love, grace, blessing and mercy of Jesus. All are satisfied; No exceptions! This also is a message of hope and consolation.

Then, how can we become recipients of this kind of miracle?

The crowd followed Jesus without expecting a free meal. They just followed him to either receive a grace of healing or listen to the words of heavenly wisdom coming out of His mouth. We, too, need to follow Jesus not because we're expecting certain worldly blessings but because He has the words of eternal life and gives us Himself, the bread from heaven. When we do that, other earthly blessings will be unexpectedly granted us as well.

Bread and fish: It's a simple and unpretentious meal. But how tasty it would've been to the people! Hunger was not the only reason why people enjoyed the meal. More important reason was that the meal overflowingly contained the love of Jesus in it. That love was the most perfect condiment that added the flavor to the meal. If we can taste His love in the gifts that he gives us, our lives would be a series of being touched by His loving miracles.

Jesus does not want us to simply stay in our happiness after we experience his love and blessings. He encourages us to share them with others in specific and practical ways as he says, "Give them some food yourselves."

Although we are insignificant and simple beings, if we get lifted up and blessed by Jesus, we can approach to others as miracles since we are carrying the love of Jesus within us. There are many souls who hunger for true love and in search of it, yet wander around at all the wrong and deserted places. We need to go to them as bountiful gifts of the Lord to satisfy their hunger. They will be moved and delighted by unexpected gifts of our loving presence.

Fr. Don Bosco Park