



"And they all ate and were satisfied" (Mk 6:42)

March 2014: Reflection: Mark 6: 30-44

We all experience many desires, whether it be for success, acceptance, food, or any other thing. Each desire urges us to grasp for the thing that is desired, and it can sometimes urge us to do so at nearly any cost. In the Gospels we read that Jesus too was hungry after forty days and nights of fasting without food. But when tempted by the devil, Jesus responds by saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." By rejecting Satan's temptation, Christ teaches us that every desire must be subordinated to the desire for God, for the imperishable food offered to us by the Word of God.

A great throng came out to meet Jesus in a remote and lonely place desiring to hear God's word. They came like sheep looking for their shepherd, with hearts open to God and to each other. As they listened attentively to "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God", they considered practical concerns about finding food to be of little importance. Jesus therefore performed a miracle there, for they had the proper disposition of heart. The miracle of the multiplication of bread takes place in the context of a community that is centered on the Word, which is recognized as the true bread that nourishes man. This passage urges us to put our search for God through the hearing and consuming of the Word as a higher priority than our daily needs and concerns. The community that gathered around Jesus was also a symbol of the new people of God, the Church, who are sustained by the word of Christ and the bread of the Eucharist. For, "they all ate and were satisfied."

The incarnate Word, the Bread of Life who alone satisfies man's hunger and thirst, is also hungry and thirsty for each one of us. He invites us to offer our whole selves like the five loaves so that we may be blessed, multiplied, broken, and distributed to the hungry. We learn this example first of all from the Cross where Jesus offers His whole self to become our bread, so that "they who hunger and thirst for righteousness" may now "have their fill" according to the righteousness they receive through faith in Him. Together with Jesus, let us therefore without any fear or hesitation offer our whole selves into God's hands, to be blessed and multiplied by Him, and also to be broken and distributed by Him.