

**March 2017**

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

*(Please read Mark 6: 30-44 for Lectio Divina in Households)*

### **Reflection:**

We all experience desires, whether it be for success, recognition, food, or any other thing. Every desire urges us to grasp at the desired thing, and it can sometimes urge us to do so at nearly any cost. In the Gospels we read that Jesus was hungry after forty days and nights of fasting. But when tempted by the devil, he 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. The desire for the perishable must be subordinated to the desire for the imperishable, which the Son of Man gives us.



A great throng came out to meet Jesus in a remote and lonely place, desiring his presence and his teaching. When Jesus saw that they hungered for the word, "he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things." The evangelist tells us that the crowd remained there with Jesus until the hour was already late. As they listened to him, they gave such priority to the word of God that they did not think of their own practical need of finding food. This reminds us of another scene from the Gospel where Jesus says, "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

Seeing this disposition in their hearts, Jesus performed a miracle there. The miracle of the multiplication of bread takes place in the context of a community that is centered on the word, the true bread that nourishes man. Meditating on this passage, we are invited to "seek first", to put our search for God through the hearing and consuming of the word as a higher priority than our daily needs and concerns. This community gathering around Jesus also becomes a powerful image of the Church, who is 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. Let us therefore feast on this heavenly bread and have our fill, subordinating all other desires to the pure and ever-growing desire for God. And together with Jesus, let us offer our whole selves into God's hands, to be blessed and multiplied by Him, to be broken and distributed.

### **Saint's Quote:**

The divine word is exceedingly rich, containing within itself every delight. Whatever you desire is found in it, just as the Jews recount that when they were eating the manna each one tasted the kind of food he liked. - St. Jerome

### **To Do:**

They ate and were satisfied! But that was twenty centuries ago. Find for yourself if the Word has the same power by chewing the Word of God with a deep desire, especially when the desires of the perishable beckons you.

