

Pentecost #9

8/2/2020

Matthew 14:13-21

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Celebrate (Introduction)

“In Today’s first reading God Invites all who are hungry or thirsty to receive food and drink without cost. Jesus feeds the hungry multitude and reveals the abundance of God. At the Eucharistic table we remember all who are hungry or poor in our world today. As we share the bread of life, we are sent forth to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry”

Opening Hymn: [“O Day of Rest and Gladness”](#)

Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
⁹ The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all your works.
¹⁴ The Lord upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down.
¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
¹⁶ You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing.
¹⁷ The Lord is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.
¹⁸ The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
¹⁹ He fulfills the desire of all who fear him;
he also hears their cry, and saves them.
²⁰ The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.
²¹ My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,
and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.

Hymn of Praise: [“We Praise You, O God”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Glorious God, your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Isaiah 55:1-5](#)

2nd Reading: [Romans 9:1-5](#)

The Gospel: [Matthew 14:13-21](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Break Now the Bread of Life”](#)

The Message: ([video](#))

Very early in life we learn that we are a social being. That is, life for the human being has the need of dependency upon other human beings for his or her well-being, basic subsistence, security, and worthiness. That basic need of dependence upon others is what brings human existence into reality. It is through relationships of all kinds that bring forth love and hate, joy and bitterness, happiness and sorrow, and compassion and rejection. If we were not a social animal, so to speak, these emotions would be difficult at best to experience as an expression of life.

Although many of the positive emotions are grounded in love, they present differing emotional experiences. This is most certainly true with compassion. One interesting definition of compassion is that which I found in the Wikipedia: “Compassion is a profound human emotion prompted by the pain of others. More vigorous than empathy, the feeling commonly gives rise to an active desire to alleviate another’s suffering.” Compassion is one of the fundamental elements of Buddhism and is defined in that religion in this way: “Compassion is that which makes the heart of the good move at the pain of others. It crushes and destroys the pain of others. Thus, it is called compassion. It is called compassion because it shelters and embraces the distressed.”

When we are confronted with the news of people who are victims of the disasters in life, our inclination is first to have empathy. That is to feel for them. But then many take the next step and move on to compassion by saying what can I do to help. This out-pouring of help shows that mankind is a social being since we need not think twice in offering assistance even though these people may never have physically touched our lives or we never personally knew them. But, we share their distress since they are human like us. We place ourselves in their shoes and this leads us to compassion and the giving of our assistance. In experiencing the pandemic, compassion is evident with those wearing masks in order to keep the virus from the possibility of spreading to others.

Human compassion can and does carry over into all of life. We have the capacity and propensity to act out of compassion to the animal kingdom and all of God’s living creation. It is a very sad, miserable and pitiful creature who cannot have any compassion for world of living creatures which

share this creation with us. To ignore compassion is to begin to deny our humanity and miss the joy of life. The Dalai Lama has said, "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion." One of the most interesting observations about compassion was from George Washington Carver. "How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these."

Today's Gospel lesson is the well-known story about Jesus and the feeding of the five thousand. It so happens to be one of the most compelling examples of compassion. After spending much time teaching and ministering in the region of Galilee, Jesus returned to his hometown of Nazareth. He appeared to have had a very successful mission in all the region but in His hometown He was greeted with skepticism and even rejection. This led Jesus to remark that: "No prophet is accepted in his own hometown." If this rejection was not enough to bear, Jesus received the news that John the Baptist, who was such a part of His life, was beheaded by Herod.

With all the wear and tear on his human form from his journeys and his rejection in his own hometown, this news of John the Baptist was the straw that broke the camel's back. He just had to get away, escape from it all, and to be by himself. He needed time to himself in order to recuperate from it all. Therefore, He asked His disciples to take Him across the Sea of Galilee to where there was more isolated territory. There he could withdraw to the privacy of a deserted place. During their voyage across the Sea of Galilee the longing for that retreat must have consumed His being. He must have been overwhelmed with His longing to be alone. But, it was not to be since His popularity in Galilee would not allow this to happen. The word spread rapidly that Jesus was on the move again and that He was traveling to the other side of the lake. In great numbers they took the land route around the lake so that when Jesus landed, there was already a large crowd to greet him.

With all the burdens He was carrying, it would have been very normal and understandable for Him to be agitated and demand that His disciples try to help Him to escape the crowd. But, He didn't. Instead, we are told, He set aside His personal needs for the rest of the day in order to tend to the needs of the people by curing their sick. The crowd had no idea of what Jesus was personally going through. They had no idea of the personal sacrifice He was making for them. This was the greatest of compassion for it was made out of sacrifice.

The story becomes even more illustrative in that He not only had compassion for those who were suffering from sickness but He had compassion for their everyday human needs. He was reminded of this by His disciples: "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late, send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus' reply was don't send them away hungry and in search of food, feed them. You know the story; the disciples only had five loaves and two fish to share. This of course was a drop in the bucket as to what would be required to feed such a large gathering. Jesus ignored this reality. He had the people sit down and He blessed what they had and gave it to the disciples to distribute.

It seems that Jesus' compassion was totally beyond any kind of reality. But what happened defied reality for they all ate with much food left over. Did Jesus perform the miracle of multiplying the food many times over? It is thought that this is what happened since nothing is beyond God's capability.

On the other hand, was there another kind of miracle involved? Did Jesus' compassion wear off onto the people? Did they learn the lesson of compassion? It must be noted that people making such a

journey would have normally carried food with them since there were no restaurants or McDonald's so to speak. They would have also had the human tendency to hoard what they had for themselves. In sharing what He had, the five loaves and two fishes, He then placed the burden, or rather joy, upon all the rest to do the same. In fact in doing this He called upon the human compassion of the people to get beyond their greed and to share what they had. Could it be that the great miracle performed that day was that this large crowd, who may have normally been controlled by greed, suddenly experienced compassion for each other and shared what they had with each other?

Regardless, Jesus brings the reality of compassion to life so that we may fulfill the best of human nature within our lives so that others may find life. This great miracle is one in which we can all participate for it is basic to humanity only deterred by greed and ego. Compassion is to let God's love become active in our lives so that others may find relief in times of despair and crisis. That is when we find true happiness and the joy of being a child of God. Compassion is what will lead us through the crisis of today.

Offering*

We give thee but thine own, what-e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Father of all creation, we thank you for showing us your love and compassion through your Son. Continue to open our lives to have the wisdom to live this example especially during these troubled times. There are many who are suffering physically and economically because of the pandemic and social turmoil. Give us the strength to make the sacrifices in order to bring comfort and healing to our brothers and sisters in need. We pray that we will always be emissaries of your love within this broken society. Keep us from being a part of the problem but let our lives be a positive force to bring equality, justice and peace. Continue to give strength and health to all care givers during this pandemic. Comfort those who have lost loved ones as a result of the corona virus. Bring healing to all who are physically and economically struggling during this time of suffering.

We continue to pray for those who have been overtaken by the corona virus and those who are caring for them in their desperate time. Help us be sensitive to all those who are suffering at this time and work towards alleviating their pain.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Pam Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Kirk Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer: Agne G ["The Lord's Prayer"](#)

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["O Living Bread from Heaven"](#)

*Offering to be sent to:
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Epiphany Lutheran Church
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