

Monday's Gospel: God Blesses our Generosity

Gospel for Monday in the 18th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 14:13-21*)

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. As he went ashore he saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the day is now

over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”

Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”

They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Commentary

The Gospel for today's Mass shows us Jesus again seeking solitude to speak with the Father. We witness that relationship, which the evangelists often remind us of, from a respectful distance, since it means approaching an abyss that we cannot fathom. It is Jesus himself who invites us to do so. He wants us to see him praying and to help us want to pray to the Father too: to pray as children (cf. *Mt* 14:23; *Mk* 1:35; 11:24; *Lk* 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1). Jesus' "solitude" when praying also tells us that it is there, in the Father, that everything we need can be found, the true nourishment our heart needs. Those who followed Jesus most closely were amazed at his intimacy with the Father. Their hearts, still guided by their human way of understanding, were focused on the needs they thought were the most pressing ones, and didn't yet

understand that there were other deeper needs.

Our Lord knows how to draw close to the Father; he knows the way. He himself is the Way, and he shows us what our true nourishment is and where it is to be found: in the the Will of the Father. He does so with a heart filled with Love, without a hint of selfishness. Our selfishness impoverishes our desires, but in Christ they are purified and revealed in all their greatness. In this passage we see how eager Jesus is to give us what we need, doing so through what we can offer each other, even if we think we don't have much to give. Whatever we have, even if it seems little, a few loaves and fish, will always be enhanced by Jesus himself, who will make use of the faith and love with which we share what we are and have. Jesus blesses our generosity: the time we offer to others, our company, our visits, our

words of advice, our prayer. These are our loaves and fish, which, given out of love and with love, are blessed like the widow of Zarephath's jars of flour and oil were blessed: constantly replenished no matter how much was used (cf. *1 Kgs* 17:8-24).

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