

2 August 2020 - Homily - Matthew 14:13-21

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Today's gospel reading is about one of the most iconic events in the life of Christ, the miracle of the feeding of the 5000+ people. John the Baptist is beheaded and Jesus withdraws to a quiet place to be by himself and pray. Jesus was initially a follower of John the Baptist. He was in the crowd with everybody else. However in order for Christ to increase, John said he had to decrease. When John is executed his followers become Jesus' followers, this is what John trained and prepared his disciples for, to follow Christ. All the disciples of John added on to the followers of Christ forming a large crowd that met him on the shore.

Jesus has compassion for the crowd because these people have gone through and been taught to repent. Now they are waiting for God to respond. Jesus responds by first curing all their sick. Next Jesus trains his 12 disciples to have self confidence, to take initiative and be leaders. He tells them to find a way to feed all these people, which is about 20 - 30 thousand including men, women and children.

The disciples find 5 loaves and 2 fish. Jesus multiplies the loaves and fish, notice he does not create them out of nowhere. The key detail in a miracle is that Christ maximizes the existing potential that is already there. Christ performs one curing and feeding miracle after another. The miracles of Christ are reproduced over and over which gives them scientific credibility. A scientific truth needs to be reproduced. Christ reproduces the bread and fish over and over. The miracle points forward to the last supper. The disciples are the mediators between Jesus and the crowds. The same way as a priest in persona Christi is the mediator between Christ and the congregation.

12 baskets represent the unified 12 tribes of Israel under the 12 disciples. The crowd is about 20-30 thousand people. Jesus feeds a gentile crowd in (15:38). The Jewish population in Palestine during Jesus' time was about 500 000. With the two large feeding miracles Jesus' is presented as feeding a tenth of the population. The feeding miracle is a social miracle because it shows that the people shared their provisions so that all had enough. The miracle of feeding the five thousand anticipates last supper. The last supper anticipates the messianic banquet in the kingdom.

Praying for all of you

Fr. Paul Magyar