

HOMILY NOTES CCC - 17TH SUNDAY YEAR B 2024

The readings we have today for this 17 Sunday of Year B highlight for us three themes for our take home today – namely, divine provision, unity and abundance of God’s grace.

The first reading from the second book of Kings 4:22-44, recalls for us the miracle of how the prophet Elisha, through the power of God, multiplies the 20 barley loaves for the people to eat, about a hundred of them. This foreshadows Christ’s miraculous feeding of the multitudes in the Gospel in Chapter 6 of the Gospel of John. John tells us that there are so many about 5,000 men alone.

We find this theme being reinforced in the Responsorial Psalm today (Ps.144) by proclaiming God’s faithful provision. “The eyes of all creatures look to you and you give them their food in due time.” It celebrates God’s generosity and His nearness to all who call upon him truth. Indeed, he is close to all those who call on him from their hearts. Through this psalm, we are all invited to trust in God’s timing and His care for all His creation.

From Paul’s letter to the Ephesians in the second reading, Paul calls the Christian community to live in unity and peace in humility, gentleness, patience and love. He tells us: “I implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation...Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together.” He speaks of one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith and one God who is Father of all. This declaration of “one God and Father of all” who is over all and through all and in all” reflects the vastness of God’s presence and activity in the world, inviting us all believers to experience and celebrate this divine fullness together.

In the Gospel of John that we begin reading from today for the next few Sundays, we encounter Jesus miraculous feeding of the five thousand as he demonstrates the power of faith and the generosity of God. A simple offering of five barley loaves and two fish becomes a feast that satisfies the hunger of thousands. This is a powerful testament to God’s miraculous provision and highlights for us that God’s abundance can transcend our limitations and that our faith in his promise can lead to miraculous outcomes. Remember the story of the prophet Elisha. Elisha fed a hundred men with twenty loaves. Jesus fed five thousand with just five loaves. Whatever happened in the Old Testament was meant to serve as a sign of better things to come under the Messiah. God went on patiently for many years preparing for the coming of His Son into the world.

John dedicates the whole of chapter 6 of his Gospel to convey a most important message: Jesus becomes the spiritual food of all Christians; he offer Himself to us in three ways; through faith in him, through His Word, and in the Eucharist.

If we have to take home something from our celebration today, it is this: to have a steady faith in God’s provision. Despite the seemingly impossible task of feeding such a large crowd with limited resources, Jesus demonstrated faith in God’s provision. That if we have trust and faith in God’s ability to provide for our needs, provision will come not in trickles but in abundance much more than expected, even in the face of challenges that may seem insurmountable for only God in Jesus has the power and the ability to do the impossible in our lives. How could that be possible?

In the words of the psalmist today: “The Lord is just in all his ways and loving in all his deeds. He is close to all who call him, who call on him from their hearts”. Paul has the last word for us: Lead a life worthy of your vocation!