

Homily of 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B (July 29, 2018)

In the first reading Elisha directed his servant to give twenty barley loaves donated to him to one hundred people to eat. His servant objected, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" Elisha commanded his servant to give the loaves to the people, and Elisha prophesied, "For thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and there shall be some left over.'" The reading concludes that the men ate and there were some left over as prophesied by Elisha.

When Jesus raised the idea of feeding the five thousand people, his disciples objected too. Philip questioned Jesus, "Where can we buy enough bread for them to eat. ... Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little." Andrew wondered, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many." After Jesus blessed the five loaves and two fish, the five thousand people ate and the left over filled twelve wicker baskets.

The readings teach us that God still multiplies loaves when we are willing to share the little we have with one another. Let no one say, "What I have is insignificant, no need bringing it." Become that man in the first reading who offered twenty loaves to Elisha. Become that child in the Gospel who brought the five loaves and two fish. Allow God to use you as he used the man and the boy. The lesson is, "Start with a generous and faithful heart with the little you have. Much can come out of a little." We can see in the readings that it is the little that is available and generously brought forward that God blesses.

In the Gospel, Jesus urged his disciples to, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." By this, Jesus teaches us that it is wrong and sinful to be wasteful. It is unfortunate and sad to see so much wastefulness in our society while millions in other parts of the world are starving. If the food and materials that are wasted in our society are sent to some other parts of the world, millions of lives will be saved.

Eating more than we should is a form of waste. It is wrong and sinful.

Drinking more than we should is a form of waste. It is wrong and sinful.

Buying more than we should is a form of waste. It is wrong and sinful.

Acquiring and keeping more than we should is a form of waste. It is wrong and sinful.

Spending on what does not matter while neglecting what matters is wrong and sinful.

Wasting time is wrong and sinful.

Throwing out food is wrong and sinful.

Discarding usable items is wrong and sinful. Such items should be giving to the needy or sent to charity organizations that distribute or sale the items to the needy.

Jesus says, "Gather fragments leftover, so that nothing will be wasted."

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