

## *Gifts multiply in the giving.*

"Have them sit down in groups of 50 or so. Then, taking the five loaves and the two fishes, Jesus raised his eyes to heaven, pronounced a blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to his disciples for distribution to the crowd," says Luke chapter 9.

As a kid I found myself intrigued by this story. Then, as a young college student, I was less intrigued by the story and more inclined to ask, "But what prevents Jesus from solving the hunger problem today the same way?" Imagine you're in one of the groups of 50. You hear these comments:

"This bread tastes flat. Doesn't have honey in it."

"I wanna be in that group - all my friends are there."

"You can't tell me they only had five loaves and two fish to start with. They hid the rest somehow."

"Bread and fish - that's it? No dessert?"

"They oughta feed us! It's the least they can do if we come out here and listen to religious stuff."

"There's a bunch of us, so he came up with a bunch of food, so it's, like, no big deal."

I wonder if any of the crowd might have had any of these reactions? What keeps Jesus from doing it again in our day? Well, one answer I came upon involves just looking closely at what Jesus did do with

the small and seemingly insignificant gifts of five loaves and two fishes. Whereas his disciples described them as "nothing" (v. 12) and felt hard-pressed by the needs of a crowd they did not think they could satisfy, Jesus took the small gifts, blessed them, gave thanks for them and acknowledged them as gifts from God. Then, he gave the gifts and, after all ate their fill, there was plenty left over. In giving away the small gifts from the small people, God's generosity was revealed.

This is the way of God; this is also the way we are to live our lives. The little love, the little knowledge, the little advice, the little possessions we have, are all gifts from God to be given away. Just as God gave food to communicate caring, and Jesus became food to speak of forgiveness, healing and salvation, so we who believe in God and in Jesus are to both give and become food for others. The more we give, from the little we have, the more we discover we have to give, for gifts multiply in the giving.

Let us pray: Thank you, O great God, for this good life. Forgive us if we do not appreciate and love it enough. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

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