

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A – 2020

Include a Letter from Fr. Phan

HOW CAN WE GIVE FOOD TO THIS HUGE CROWD?

Let me begin with this beautiful story of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She wrote: “In Calcutta alone we feed about ten thousand people every day. This means if one day we do not cook, ten thousand people will not eat.

One day, the Sister in charge came to tell me, “Mother, we have nothing left. We do not have food for so many people.” I felt numb. It was the first time that such a thing had happened. When the Sister had left, I closed the door crying to Jesus: “Lord, these poor people are yours. The Sisters and I are merely instruments in your hands. We can cook, but we cannot multiply the food. You are the one who feed them. Don’t let them go hungry. Don’t let them die. I beg you, Lord.”

Around nine in the morning a truck loaded with bread arrived and donated all the food to us. What a wonderful miracle! Every day the government gives the poor children a slice of bread and a glass of milk. I do not know why, but the city schools were closed that day. Thus, all the bread and milk ended up at Mother Teresa’s Charity Center.

In conclusion, she said: “You see, God had closed the schools giving students a break so that many thousand people were fed. He could not allow our people to go hungry. It was the first time that they were able to eat fresh bread and drink fresh milk that was very good; and they all ate it until they were satisfied.”

Mother Teresa’s story is similar to the miracles we hear from the readings today, especially from the Gospel. It is a large crowd – over five thousand people. It is the close of the day. Overwhelmed by ministry, the disciples actually tell Jesus to send the people away. But Jesus cannot let people go hungry.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God; he is the almighty God. I would say that Jesus could directly perform a miracle to give food to the hungry crowds without asking for the five loaves and two fish, nor needing the assistance of the disciples.

But we hear Jesus ordering or even urging the disciples: “You yourselves give them something to eat.”

The disciples do not understand what Jesus means? How can they give food to this huge crowd? All they have is only five loaves and two fish. It is too little for that many people. The disciples can’t believe if these simple gifts can do any good.

Yes, indeed. They never know the will of God. Nothing is impossible with God. Small gift but if you generously give it to Jesus, and let him do the rest, the amazing work of God happens. Nobody can believe that more than five thousand people can be fed by Jesus using only five loaves and two fish. But it is true. It is the work of the almighty God.

As we can see from the gospel, Jesus did not do the work by himself. Rather, he demanded the disciples to “give” the crowds “some food.” Jesus asks you and me today too: “Could you give something to the poor? Could you share something with the needy?”

When the disciples gave him the loaves and the fish, he took the loaves and the fish, gave thanks to God, and multiplied them, to feed the people. This is what we are doing now at this Eucharistic table as we continue what Jesus did at the Last Supper. We offer to God the gift from our community; we give thanks to God; we break the bread and share the cup through the Holy Communion we receive at Mass.

Jesus invited his disciples and all of us today to work with him to help those in need. Our gifts are small as the five loaves and the two fish. Our work is simple as only a helping hand to the parish community. But if we give them to Jesus with all our hearts, he will multiply our gifts and our work for the benefit of many. May God bless us all for our generous hearts!

Now I am sharing with you a likely story of what happening with us here at St. Cecilia's and St. Mary's Parish Community. Thanks to generous giving from our parishioners and friends and benefactors, we have been saving for the last three years and now ready for the renovation of the church of St. Mary's in Nicasio. We've been working for almost two months now and the works get closer to completion.

However, like the story of Mother Teresa above, "I felt numb" when learning some reports about the numbers: originally, the estimate of total cost for this project was \$194,482. Now, with some change orders, the whole job is going to be \$222,969. This is very much over the budget and money we have... We have no more money in our saving account...

We are short \$28,487 in order to finish the work. Now we have to ask for a loan and we have to figure out how to pay it back. I am afraid to be in this "debt."

As the disciples in the gospel story, I cried to the Lord: How can we get this almost \$29,000 during this difficult time? For the last several months, we haven't had much from the collections. Not many people come back for Mass. No way we can have fundraising event in the midst of the COVID-19. I felt numb. I couldn't have much sleep. I cried. I challenged the Lord: look, the Church is yours; the community is yours; I am merely an instrument in your hands, Lord. Please, help me. Please, answer our prayers, Lord!

I have been making a lot of phone calls to my family and friends near and far, asking for help. For the last couple days, I have received some generous donations, and more will come in the mail (around 14 to 15 thousand dollars). Thanks be to God and thanks to all my friends – generous givers.

Now I am sending this message to you our parishioners and friends of St. Cecilia and St. Mary Parish Community, to whom I could not yet reach out by phone. Please help us to pay back the debt. Checks are given to St. Mary Catholic Church (memo: for renovation).

Mailing address: St. Cecilia-St. Mary Church, P.O. Box 289, Lagunitas, CA 94938.

Thank you and may God bless you all for your generous hearts!

MASS INTENTIONS

(from Sun. August 2 to Sat. August 8)

Sunday	8 a.m.	SC ...	Corey Dallara (birthday – August 1)
Monday	8 a.m.	SC ...	Andrues Family (Mary Kate & Nathan: birthday August 4)
Tuesday	No Mass
Wednesday	8 a.m.	SC ...	Victor Frugoli (for health)
Thursday	8 a.m.	SC ...	Steve Gaddis (for health)
Friday	8 a.m.	SC ...	Walter Echo (for health)
Saturday	8 a.m.	SC ...	Martha McNeil (birthday)