

## The Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ - C (2022)

Genesis 14:18-20

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Luke 9:11b-17

*“He blessed and broke and gave...”*

Those words are taken from the Gospel that we have just heard, and they are familiar to every member of the faith, everywhere in the world – for they are spoken at every Mass. They introduce the words of Consecration...

*“He blessed and broke and gave...”*

Those same words will be heard again at the Last Supper; but, on this day, they are spoken in a different setting. Here, many have gathered to hear our Lord – and to be healed. Now the hour has grown late, and they are hungry. But there is little to eat – just a few loaves and a couple of fish. But the Lord takes them, blesses them, and thanks God for them.

Some might consider that what our Lord is holding in his hands is very little, hardly worthy of thanks. The disciples seem to feel that way. Theirs is a voice of complaint, *“There are too many people and too little food. Let them go home.”* Yet our Lord gives thanks to God for this peasant’s meal of bread and fish – and, somehow, under the spell of gratitude, they become food more than enough to feed the crowd.

And that may be where this Gospel still speaks to us today – for it may speak a truth which we still need to hear. It may be asking us to look within ourselves, and to ask if we are as grateful as we should be. For we are a culture that has become accustomed to much, maybe to too much. There are, I suspect, in this Church today, few of us who do not have more than our parents had. What we

may call, “*necessity*”, they may of called, “*luxury*”, and our Lord may be asking us to become more grateful for simple things – and to teach the importance of such gratitude to the little ones. For a country – or a family or a person – who forgets to say “*Thank you*” for the little things, will soon forget to say “*thank you*” for anything at all.

The other day I was talking to someone who was having trouble breathing in the humid summer air. “*But,*” she said, “*Thank God, I still can breath, though it is not easy sometimes.*” She was thanking God for her breath, for being able to breathe. I felt embarrassed. Too often I may not thank God for the peasant’s meal. She clearly does.

*“He blessed and broke and gave...”*

Not only is our Lord grateful for the little that is given to him that day; he even shares it. And, somehow, in that act of sharing, the little which he has becomes more than enough. And that fact has also given birth to a legend about the boy who apparently gave up his few loaves and fish that day, so that Christ might feed the multitude. According to it, the boy hurries home, after all the fragments have been gathered, and he tells his mother about the incident, with eyes still wide with wonder. He tells her how those five little loaves and a few fish were multiplied in the Lord’s hands. And, then, with a wistful look on his face, he adds, “*I wonder if it would be the same with everything you gave him.*”  
From the mouths of infants!

And there may be something else too, which we have to remember; and, that is, that call to be generous is about much more than just money. It is about a way of seeing life. I may meet in a store – or on the street – someone whose accent or

skin color is different from mine. I may find myself banging heads with someone in my family whose behavior irritates me. I may be upset by a colleague at work who hurt me – and who knows it. How generous am I – with patience, understanding, forgiveness? These are gifts which I can give – or which I can withhold. In fact, sometimes, I may find it much easier to be generous with my money than with my heart. Our Lord asks for both.

So, we are back to the woman who has trouble breathing; we are back to the little boy of the legend; we are back to our Lord performing miracles with a few loaves and fish – and we are back to asking ourselves how we can live the charity of this Gospel.

Those, I think, are some of the lessons that we might take from the line...

*“He blessed and broke and gave...”*