

Homily. 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 27/28 July 2024.

Now, imagine this.....After a successful but tiring mission Jesus and his disciples headed off by boat on the Sea of Galilee. They sailed a few kilometres away from the crowds for some quiet time, some rest and recreation. However, soon after arriving people had tracked them down and on foot they arrived in droves, crowds so big that they couldn't be escaped or ignored.

These crowds came to Jesus to hear of healing, hope and truth. They were different to the crowds we see and hear daily on our screens. They are drawn to messages of anger, resentment and false promises. Jesus crowds were hungry for true good news so taught them for a long time, feeding them on the care, wisdom and compassion of God.

The afternoon passed quickly and then it was time to go. Jesus knew that all of these people had made a great effort to come to him. He also knew that they had a long walk ahead of them and that few had brought along any food and drink. Because Jesus cared he decided that as many as five thousand people should all be fed before they went off home.

So, he turned to his disciples asking where some food could be bought? Philip in particular had no real answers to this, not even enough money to meet such a request. All of them hopelessly threw their arms up and shrugged in reply. Then another disciple, Andrew, found a little boy who had brought along a small lunch packed for him by his loving Mum, but what could his little lunch do to feed so many? It seemed useless.....

Now, picture this.....Jesus kindly asking the boy if he would give him his lunch and the boy thinking about this for a bit before deciding he would let Jesus have all of his food. I wonder if we would have done this? Or would we more likely have looked around at the big hungry crowd and thought to ourselves; no way known that I'm giving my gift to anyone?

What we do know is that this boy did choose to give Jesus his 5 small baked buns and 2 dried fish, all that he had from his thoughtful Mum. Jesus impressed children. He cared for and really listened to them. Like this unnamed small boy they trusted him and so, as we say, the rest is history. The boy's trusting offering, placed in the careful hands of Jesus, went on to feed and satisfy everyone with 12 baskets full left over.

Most of us don't have a lot to offer and no one of us has everything to satisfy everyone, but like the small boy we all have something to give. If we do this, trusting in Jesus wisdom and loving power, sharing whatever we have of our time, talent and treasure to help others, then there will be more than enough for everyone.

So, the message here is let's aim to be more like the small boy! For, you see, the truth of the matter is that our world has more than enough to meet our needs if we decide to trust In the Lord, offering over whatever we have to benefit others. And in case you're wondering, as for our endless wants, they're another matter entirely for another day; big issues of justice, unselfishness, correct perspective and wise self control.