

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 26, 2009

Gospel: (John 6:1-15)

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples...When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "*Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?*"... One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?" Jesus said, "*Have the people recline.*" So they reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had their fill, he said to his disciples, "*Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted.*"

Reflection:

The multiplication account has more to do with what Jesus was saying about the future than about feeding a hungry crowd. The abundance is a sign of the resurrected life and points to a time of fulfillment when God's plan for redemption is finally realized. The bread grain is specified as barley, the grain used by the poor; in the messianic reign the poor will share in God's abundance. Jesus supersedes both the apostles' and the crowds expectations: with little he feeds many...Jesus is the sign of God's lavish presence and love. We Christians are to see our lives through the lens of God's extravagant love. Do we? (Living Liturgy, p.178)

Vincentian Meditation:

"For Vincent and Frederic, there is only one love. The love of God and the love of the neighbor are one and the same love. It is our love in response to God's love for us. Since the loving God cannot be seen but must be experienced through loving people, it follows that one who see others without loving cannot love or even know God. For Vincent and Frederic, as for Jesus, love is neither sentiment, nor affection, nor theory, but a practical willing of another's best interests and a consequent striving to advance those interests. Vincentians are about loving. Love is a verb, not a noun. Vincentians are concerned with the practice and exercise of the virtue of charity...loving God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God."(US Manual, P.26)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

Who are the "loving people" in your life in whom you have experienced the love of God?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, draw our hearts away from selfishness,

- turn our lives to loving service.

Lord, may we bring the bread of hope to the poor,

-teach us to serve you in those who suffer.

Lord, may we come to know the abundance of your love

-give us compassionate hearts. Amen

