



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY March 11 & BEYOND”

“A Reminder of Who Still Provides”



A wonderful, hopeful story is read on Sunday, March 11, right in the middle of the season of Lent - that church year season of repentance, self-examination of any disobedience, the call to get back on track with God. It is the miracle story of

Jesus' provision of food for the thousands following him. And no questions asked! Just compassionate provision. It is the telling of the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. It is one of two miraculous feedings recorded in the Gospels. We hear that there were 5000 men there (and quite possibly, adding in women and children attending, up to 10,000 or more).

Unless you were there, such stories of miracles are hard to relate to. Let me share a small miracle story that has happened many, many times in people's lives. Perhaps you can understand how huge that feeding miracle was, and for now, a reason for putting this story into the middle of Lent. Say your life is falling apart in some or many reasons. You are very stressed, trying to figure out some solution, some kind of answers. You know you can't blame everybody else; you come to honestly realize that you yourself have created many of the situations for which you are now seeking some answer. One of the immediate needs you have is financial. In any case, you decide to go walking and praying, and on the path of your walk you intend to walk around the outside of a local church. “If I can just hear from God somehow.....” As you walk around the side of the church you see something on the sidewalk with a note on it. It's an envelope, and it has your name on it. First and last. It's for you. Inside the envelope is exactly what you needed for that financial need. What is your immediate and natural response? Joy? Relief? Disbelief? Renewed hope for all the other concerns you have? Drop to your knees in thanksgiving? Keep walking around the church – maybe another envelope will appear?!

You might say after reading this story, “Oh, well, that would never happen – so don't try to apply that here!” – of course, you would not say that if you had actually found that envelope!! And the experience over 2000 years, and even longer, is of this God, the God and Father of Jesus Christ, providing many, many such “envelopes”, many miracles of provision

In the story of the miraculous feeding you hear God's provision. Missionaries especially have been relaying stories of God's provision since Jesus walked on the earth, and this new century is no different. After a very quick search on the internet for something recent, comes this testimony of a small miracle of provision (sometimes people will believe smaller miracles more readily than unthinkable ones). A missionary group from a Nazarene congregation in the US Northwest went to a foreign nation to do Vacation Bible School kind of ministry with kids, show the Jesus movie, and to provide shoes. In preparation, and then upon arriving, several counts and recounts showed 100 expandable rubber shoes (GREAT idea for giving, by the way). A line was formed, and it was clear there were more children in line than 100. For some reason, one of the missionary team members decided to go back and look in the bags again where they had just removed ALL of the shoes. Miraculously, they found another 21 pairs, one for each of the children still in the line. If you want to read about it and contact them to ask whatever questions you need to ask go to <http://nazarene.org/article/ww-team-experiences-miraculous-abundance-during-myanmar-trip> .

So here are these stories being presented to you right in the middle of Lent. Why? Because as we do the hard work of Lent it can become overwhelming, even depressing, considering our separation from God and wondering whether we can get ourselves into his graces, or back into his graces. In the midst of us thinking that WE have to figure everything out, or that if we DONT figure it all out our lives are over, the Church assists by taking time to remember the promises. That is, God's mercy and compassion are still the ways that he shows his love. THIS is what our self-examination is for; not for condemnation. It is for seeking God's help and his mercy toward us. And as we continue on for a couple more weeks in this man-made Lent, we are reminded of that repentance leads to resurrection. Our self-examination and repentance prepares us to receive what God's mercy has sent -- by his hand, and by his power alone, a wonderful, joyful, hopeful, encouraging event that changed everything. In Lent we are looking forward to the celebration of the Great Miracle, known to most of us as Easter, the resurrection of Jesus from the Dead.

So, why did Jesus feed 5,000? It is an event to literally believe, an action of the power, the mercy and the compassion of God in Jesus, because Jesus knew people would be hungry. It was also to be a sign: God fed the 5,000 to show you that God

ALONE can satisfy the spiritual hunger of anyone who seeks him and his righteousness. And even provided those extra 21 pairs of shoes out of “nowhere” to proclaim to those children who God is as their provider.

Jesus would say later, "As it is written in the Scriptures, “They will all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me... I tell you the truth anyone who believes in me has eternal life. Yes! I am the Bread of Life!" (John 6:45- 48).

Father Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Fourth Sunday in Lent — Rose Sunday

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)

5:15p Evening Prayer, Soup, and Study (Parish Hall)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors’ Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)

WEDNESDAY: Noon Stations of the Cross (Church)

FRIDAY: 6:15pm Stations of the Cross (Church)

SATURDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies’ Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men’s Group (Parish Hall)