



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY July 22 & BEYOND”

“No Doubt should exist: it was a massive miracle of feeding”



Don't let ANY one tell you - ever - that the feeding of the 5000 people by Jesus was anything but a straight-up MIRACLE of feeding that many people starting with only 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Anybody in their right or left mind knows that is impossible. And that is why it was a miracle. Sometimes people,

who just can't handle the idea of any miracle, whatsoever, change the meaning. Pastors and Priests alike. It's like suggesting that the crowd wouldn't possibly have gone anywhere without food in their cloak, calling it the “Miracle of Sharing” instead. No, sir. As well, in another Gospel there are TWO miracles of such: 4000 and 5000. (By the way, although our Sunday reading is from Mark's Gospel, the story of the 5000 is found in all four of the gospels.) Are we supposed to think that is some kind of ancient literary device to force us to believe in Sharing rather than Creation? No, sir. And it is demeaning to make it otherwise, because to do so means that God is less powerful than the creation He made in the first place. No. He made it; he can manipulate it. And that is good news for us as we pray for so many things that need opposite outcomes, like healings.

The following comes from a Roman Catholic lay woman, Amy Wellborn. As I was doing some research on that “miracle of sharing” teaching, I discovered she had already, placed it into her own blog. She has said most everything else I wanted to “share” with you on this Gospel lesson coming up on Sunday. So, with kudos to her, I yield the reflection floor to her.

Fr. Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

“An acquaintance of mine recently wrote to share an unpleasant Mass-going experience. The priest in his small hometown parish was preaching on the Gospel...account of the miracle of the loaves and the fishes from Matthew. His interpretation of the event was not exactly comforting to this acquaintance, for the priest suggested that perhaps what “really” happened had nothing to do with miracles as we know them. Perhaps Jesus so moved his listeners that they took out the food they had hidden in their cloaks and shared it with those

around them. The miracle, therefore, is not any “magical” multiplication, but the miracle of the previously selfish being moved to generosity.

“Who knows how the rest of the congregation received this interesting news, but one of them (my correspondent) couldn’t just walk away without questioning the priest. After Mass, he asked him to clarify. The priest explained that no, he wasn’t denying the miracle, but that the miracle was – yes – the generosity of the people. He said he didn’t have time to go into it further.

“The teller of this tale was justifiably appalled by what he’d heard. But, as I wrote back, as disappointing as it was, I couldn’t be surprised. For I’d heard it myself, a couple of times from different pulpits. I suspected it was a fairly common interpretation, so I checked around and found that I was right. Numerous folks who contacted me about this said that they’d heard it too – in both Catholic and Protestant churches – in exactly the same words. I couldn’t help but wonder where all of these preachers were picking this up, and it didn’t take me long to find out.

“It’s in one of the most venerable Scripture commentaries out there – those written by Scottish scholar William Barclay in the 1950’s. Most people who’ve studied religion at the college level have been exposed to Barclay, and many own sets of his commentaries (we do). He’s very middle-of-the road and moderate in his views. But in his commentary on this story, he offers an interpretation, which he doesn’t say is his own, but is held “by some.”

“He wrote: ‘Picture the scene. There is the crowd; it is late; and they are hungry. But was it really likely that the vast majority of that crowd would set out around the lake without any food at all? Would they not take something with them, however little? Now it was evening and they were hungry. But they were also selfish. And no one would produce what he had, lest he have to share it and leave himself without enough. Then Jesus took the lead. Such as he and his disciples had, he began to share with a blessing and an invitation and a smile. And thereupon all began to share, and before they knew what was happening, there was enough and more than enough for all. If this is what happened, it was not the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes; it was the miracle of the changing of selfish people into generous people at the touch of Christ.’”

“So there you have it, neatly packaged for the lazy preacher who will use it to sound clever, no matter how many problems the explanation holds:

If everyone brought some food, who, exactly, was left to be hungry?

“This interpretation suggests that first-century Jews were naturally averse to sharing, which is not only offensive, but historically and culturally inaccurate. It may be a miracle

for 21st century Americans to share, but sharing and hospitality were sacred obligations for Jesus' listeners.

“Yes, there are layers of meaning to this event. It is of little use as a bare fact as it is as a fabrication. Miracles are offered as complex signs of God’s presence and activity among us, working through and even with us at times, open to rich interpretation in infinite application. But to presume that the Gospel writers couldn’t have meant what they wrote implies that they were either stupid or dishonest. The Scripture is a collection of diverse works, meant to be understood within the specific literary forms God used to communicate truth. But as the Gospel writers themselves make clear, they are not about anything but historical truth about an historical figure named Jesus. Anything less wouldn’t have been worth their time. Or their lives.

“Or ours, come to think of it, don’t you think?”

<http://amywelborn.com/about.html>

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: **The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*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)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies’ Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men’s Group (Parish Hall)

SATURDAY 7:00pm Willan West 2018 Celebration — Mass ~ Mass of St. Mary
One of Healey Willan’s most unique masses, Missa Brevis no.6 (c. 1935)
based upon chorales of J. S. Bach for each movement.