

## TODAY'S LOAVES AND FISHES

**Sunday May 29 (GN 14:18-20, 1 COR 11:23-26, LK 9:11B-17)**

This Sunday we hear the familiar Gospel story of the loaves and fishes. Sunday is also the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

The account of the loaves and fishes begins with the day drawing to a close. The apostles asked Jesus to dismiss the crowds so that they could find dinner. Jesus's response was to, "Give them some food yourselves."

Pope Benedict wrote, "For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being." (*Deus Caritas Est*, #17)



Jesus simply said it more succinctly, "Give them some food yourselves."

This reminds me of a quote from St. Gregory the Great, "When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice."

Because the people were hungry, the apostles feeding them would have been "paying a debt of justice."

Reminded of their responsibility to the poor, but without having the resources to give what was required, the apostles turned to Jesus for help. Portending the Last Supper, Jesus blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he shares the events of the Last Supper – the taking of bread and wine, blessing them and sharing these with the apostles – which presaged Holy Communion.

**Holy Communion (Eucharist) binds us to a covenant with God, with each other, and with the "other," who is not really an "other" but one of us, just like you, me and each one of us; each other. This binding covenant is to integrate concrete practices of love into our lives.** (cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, #14)

Saint John Paul II called the Eucharist "the school of active love for neighbor" that "increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today." (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #14)

We witness this in the story of the loaves and fishes: God gives us Bread. God gives us Bread because we need it. We in turn must give our bread to those who need it.

### What you can do

Giving someone else's bread – by serving meals from a soup kitchen – is *not* payment of one's debt of justice. (But it is an essential characteristic of our faith: to be in relationship with others.)

Payment could look like:

- Donating food and money to soup kitchens and St. Vincent de Paul
- Advocating for increased funding for food stamps and [The Emergency Food Assistance Program](#)
- Bringing meals to someone in your parish or neighborhood. Whether you know it or not, someone near you does not have enough food to eat.
- Support a [Catholic Relief Services project](#) with lasting solutions to global hunger and poverty