

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Apr 9th 2016

Our Hope for Everlasting Life

Today's passage from John is significant, as it appears in all four Gospels. The basic premise is that Jesus meets all our needs, even our most basic ones. In our land where bounty abounds, it can be easy to overlook the miracle Jesus performs in John's Gospel. The people have followed Jesus and are hungry, without access to food or drink. It's hard for many of us to imagine what it would be like to in a remote space... at least it is for me.

In this passage, Jesus teaches the disciples, members of the crowd and us, the readers, how we are to embrace our life as creatures: take what is placed before us, give thanks, and share the bounty. This simple recipe is not only one to be used during the act of eating, but can also serve us in all our activities.

What strikes me most about this passage in all the Gospels, is Jesus' effort to welcome everyone and to ensure that everyone has their fill. Jesus teaches that there is always room for one more. I witnessed this value of hospitality and welcome during my time living and studying in the Dominican Republic as a Creighton student and during my time as a Cap Corps volunteer in Managua, Nicaragua. While in both of these countries, I was welcomed into homes, extended food and drink, and invited to participate in sacred family celebrations (birthdays, quincineras, weddings, etc.). Though the families were often of pocos recursos (few resources), they readily welcomed me into their homes, often with a cup of warm coffee and traditional food. Regardless of how many people were present, there was always room for one more and true belief that community would grow in the division of resources. This demonstration of love and care for the other, truly impacted me, as it provided a significant contrast to the U.S. culture, which teaches the principle of scarcity.

From the author of John, we learn, if we choose to walk with Christ, our lives will be filled with abundance, in ways we likely cannot predict. This passage is an important reminder that we are not in control of our lives; rather, we are creatures and dependent on God for our needs. It also highlights the importance of community and the responsibility we have, in Christ, to provide for our brothers and sisters. It is in sharing that we bring the body of Christ to fulfillment here on earth.

As we continue in this Easter season, let us pray for our eyes to be opened to recognize our brothers and sisters in need and to bring our needs to Christ, who can provide us with the ultimate nourishment: agape love.

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