

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Aug 7th 2017

We have hit the dog days of summer and for many, this may mean that it is time to hunker down in the quiet air conditioning of their home. Enough with the backyard barbecues and potlucks. Today's readings are a reminder that this is exactly the opposite of what God wants for us. God's desire is for us to come together. In a sense, today's readings are a reminder of the role hospitality plays in our faith life. Consider these lessons from today's readings.

Hospitality is not about what you have, but what you do with what we have.

The disciples saw the size of the need and the littleness of the human resources available; Jesus saw the size of the need and the greatness of God's resources available. How many times in our lives have we been reluctant to invite others into our home because we thought it was too small? Jesus is asking us to turn our lens towards God so we can see all of the possibilities in our lives, rather than the limitations.

Hospitality is about acting with grace.

The true miracle in the gospel today might not be so much from the feeding, but what happened to the crowd when they were in the presence of Jesus. Think about how Jesus treated his guests. He asked them to make themselves comfortable, he blessed the loaves, he provided great dinner conversation. In doing this the crowd sensed that this meal was special. No one was worried that they wouldn't get enough and so they didn't think of their own needs. Everyone shared. Jesus' compassion and grace were contagious and the crowd acted accordingly. Jesus is asking us to welcome and encourage others through our daily interactions with one another. He is asking us to help others see the possibilities by acting with grace and compassion.

Hospitality is about building community.

Jesus could have easily listened to the disciples and let the crowds go find food, but he knew the transformative power of breaking bread together. When we break bread together our relationships are strengthened and we become more closely bonded, strengthening us for service in the world. Jesus knew that our deepest hunger can be satisfied and our brokenness can be healed through the act of the Eucharist. In our lives what are we doing to gather guests at the table?

Hospitality can be difficult.

The last lesson that comes from the first reading. Having hosted many dinner parties and serving meals to less than receptive children I was most heartened by this passage. Moses was frustrated, it is difficult to work for caring for many, especially when they complain. What a great reminder that God meets us where we are. Sometimes the journey can be difficult, but God is always there. It's ok to struggle, it is in the struggle that our relationships is strengthened.

Finally, hospitality is about being receptive.

As we work through the day today let us remember to be open to God working in and through us. Let

us open our hearts and minds to his love and invite others in to do the same.

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