

Homily – Feast of Corpus Christi

June 22, 2019

Jesus leads his disciples to a quiet place, the wilderness, for rest, peace, and prayer. However, the crowds find him, and thousands of people bring their sick relatives and friends – as well as their own deep hunger for God. He heals their sick and teaches them about the kingdom of God – a place of justice, healing, reconciliation, mercy, and compassion, and God’s enduring love.

Are his disciples frustrated that the crowds interrupt the disciples’ rest and prayer time? Are they in wonder at Jesus’ power to heal and to teach the good news? We do not know, but we do learn that the disciples become truly concerned about night approaching in the wilderness where there is no food for the crowds. The disciples look to Jesus to do something – namely, stop preaching and healing, and send these people away!

For Jesus, the crowds are not an interruption but, rather, an opportunity to serve. Moreover, in the kingdom of God, disciples do not send needy people away – they care for one another. In the kingdom disciples meet others’ needs; they do not dismiss them. So, Jesus involves his disciples in distributing the little food they have.

But first he blesses the food. He thanks God for the gift of nourishment. God provides all that we need with enough left over to share with our less fortunate sisters and brothers. Jesus then breaks the bread and has his disciples distribute it.

Today, we hear clear echoes of the Last Supper. Jesus blesses bread and wine, breaks the bread, and invites his disciples to eat of his Body and to drink his Precious Blood. Every Eucharist recalls the Last Supper and the death of the Lord to show us God's unconditional care and love for us. The liturgy becomes detached from our lives if it does not lead us to feed the hungry. Feeding the hungry without the Eucharist is not satisfying or empowering. At every Eucharistic celebration we hear the gospel proclaimed and receive nourishment for our journey --- through the wilderness even.

We are about to embark on a short journey at the end of this mass through downtown San Antonio in praise of the Eucharist. The procession should remind us that we are to carry the word of God and Jesus dwelling within us to everyone we encounter in life. We are all responsible for continuing Jesus' mission and ministry. Our Lady of Guadalupe, give us wisdom, insight, and courage to be faithful, generous, caring disciples of your beloved Son!