



17th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME ***YEAR B – July 29, 2018***

In the first reading from the book of kings (2 Kings 4:42-44), we hear about a miracle that enabled over 100 people to eat from 20 barley loaves and still have some left over. In the gospel (John 6:1-15), we hear about a miracle that enabled 5000 people to eat from 5 barley loaves and two fish and still have 12 baskets full of food left over. What does all this mean to those of us who live in a world where we are told by some that there are too many people and not enough food. The problem is not the quantity of food on planet earth. It's the distribution of food to hungry people by those who have more than they need. Recall the Chinese story of the 3 foot long chop sticks. They must be held at the very end and people are not able to feed themselves. But if people feed each other, there is enough to go around.

Maybe the real miracle in the scripture readings today is that people followed the example of Elisha and Jesus and shared what they had with those who had nothing. We can all do that in a world that sometimes speaks to us about nothing but gloom and doom. The glass is always half empty for such folks. They are like people who sit on their front porch and complain to passersby about everything.

A friend of mine sent me a marvelous philosophical reflection on that reality and I'd like to share it with you. On the first day, God created the dog and said: 'Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this, I will give you a life span of twenty years. 'The dog said: 'That's a long time to be barking. How about only ten years and I'll give you back the other ten? And God agreed.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said: 'Entertain people, do tricks, and make them laugh. For this, I'll give you a twenty-year life span. 'The monkey said: 'Monkey tricks for twenty years? That's a long time to perform. How about I give you back ten like the Dog did? And God agreed.

On the third day, God created the cow and said: 'You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer's family. For this, I will give you a life span of sixty years. 'The cow said: 'That's kind of a tough life for sixty years. How about twenty and I'll give back the other forty? And God agreed.

On the fourth day, God created humans and said: 'Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. For this, I'll give you twenty years. 'But the human said: 'Only twenty years? Could you possibly give me my twenty, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back; that makes eighty, okay?' And God said, "Okay, I can do that."

'So that is why for our first twenty years we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next ten years we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last ten years we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.'

Fortunately, the vision of Jesus offers more hope than that. We can't multiply loaves and fishes as he did. But we can share what we have with people in need. And that would be enough for the moment. It was then, and it is now.

Share
the JOY
OF
Loaves&Fishes