

July 20, 2018

Greetings to all the Faithful of St. Andrew's,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

In this week's Gospel reading, which is Matthew 14:14-22, we read that Jesus "had compassion" on a crowd of people and healed their sick" (v.14). They were in the wilderness and as it was getting late, the disciples doubting that their supplies were enough, told Jesus to "send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves" (v.15) but "Jesus said "you give them something to eat" (v.16). The disciples still in doubt about the adequacy of their resources said that they had "only five loaves" and "two fish" (v.17). Jesus then responded by telling them to give him the loaves and the fish (v.18) and then told the crowd to sit down on the grass, and then he "blessed" and "broke" the loaves and had the food distributed to the crowds and "they all ate and were satisfied," and afterwards there were "twelve baskets full of broken pieces left over" (vv.19-20). We are told that "those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children."

There are very interesting statements and symbols presented in this Gospel reading. I would like to make the following observations for the purpose of stimulating your thoughts and curiosity: 1. Jesus acts out of compassion, which is a big theme in the Gospel of Matthew as a whole. 2. The crowd was gathered in a desert/wilderness and yet they sit down on grass. 3. The food available is five loaves and two fish which represents the Scriptures: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. 4. Everyone eats and is satisfied. 5. There were twelve baskets left over. The number twelve symbolizes the Scriptural Israel that is created by God's Word, which has the capacity to continue feeding others because God's teaching is inexhaustible. 6. Those fed were five thousand men, besides women and children. Note the repeat of the number five: five loaves and the five thousand men. Note also the play on the number two. Two fish and the two groups: women and children. In the Bible the number 7 is the heavenly number.  $5 + 2 = 7$ .

These points will hopefully encourage us to read and hear Scripture with attention to detail. There are reasons behind the words. We will, with God's help, bring together these ideas into a coherent message when we meet this coming Lord's day.

Brothers and sisters, remember to go to Church, read the Bible, say your prayers, and don't forget God.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Herman