

There's been a very few times when preparing for Mass that I didn't put out enough hosts to get us through communion. I take into account the hosts we hold in reserve in the tabernacle; the average number of those I expect to come forward for communion; and at the last moment I look over the congregation to see if I need to tell one of the servers to get another sleeve of hosts ready when we set the altar.

On just a couple of occasions I've had to ask the eucharistic ministers to be ready to break some of the hosts in half to extend the Body of Christ to all who are left. Believe me when I say this is NOT the multiplication, but a recovery in the event of poor planning on MY part.

Needless to say, Jesus did NOT have poor planning when it came to feeding the multitude. In fact, we heard that when he asked the Apostle Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?", "he himself KNEW what he was going to do."

The multiplication of the loaves and fishes should have been a sign to the people as to WHO Jesus is. They were aware of other signs, or miracles, he performed and heard him preach in their towns and heal their neighbors, yet their understanding of who he was was beyond their reach, beyond their comprehension. Who they SAW was who they WANTED to see - the Prophet, their NEW KING.

Last week we heard that Jesus looked out on the throng of people who were chasing after him from all the surrounding towns just to hear him speak. And he took pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began to teach them, and FED the hunger in their hearts, their SPIRITUAL hunger for God's favor to be with them once again.

And here WE are today, not so much as to satisfy an obligation, but to be fed SPIRITUALLY on the Word of God and PHYSICALLY with the

Body of Christ, the Bread of Life. In churches around the world the faithful gather to listen to, not only HEAR, but to LISTEN TO the Word of God, to see if we can't make it truly come to life in our hearts and in our daily lives. The Word of God is the food that nourishes our belief in God and in His love for mankind, the food that turns our hearts back to God and to concern for our neighbor.

And together we raise our voices to God with songs and prayer in thanksgiving for all we have been given by God. Some of us may give thanks for an ABUNDANCE of reasons, while some give thanks for just being able to open their eyes to one more new day in their lives. But in it all we give thanks in Jesus' sharing of himself with us, feeding us with his body and blood, that we may be one with him and in him, as he is in us.

After we are fed here, after communion, we too gather up the remnants, the Bread of Life which is left over, and place him in the tabernacle, just as Jesus spoke in the gospel, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." We do this so that Jesus can be taken to those who are unable to celebrate with us here – those in hospitals, group homes and nursing homes, prisons, and the homebound. So, we are not only called to gather together in prayer, but we are also called to reach out to those who desire that SAME INTIMACY with Jesus that we here today enjoy at the altar of our Lord.

The miracle that took place 2000 years ago pales to the millions who Jesus feeds with his body every day around the world. Come, you who are hungry; listen, eat, and drink without cost, and have life within you.