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John 6:1-21

Rev. Carmen Ramirez

Assistant to the Bishop, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

John 6:1-21

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

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Good morning, friends in Christ. My name is Carmen Ramirez. I am the assistant to the Bishop in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Today, we gather to reflect on the very powerful

story of Jesus feeding the five thousand as recorded in John 6:1-21. This passage not only demonstrates the miraculous power of Jesus but also invites us to consider how we can respond to God's abundant grace in our own lives and how we can impact the lives of others.

The Miracle of Multiplication:

In John 6:1-21, we see a large crowd following Jesus because they saw the signs He had performed by healing the sick. As the crowd grew hungry, Jesus asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" Philip's response highlighted the enormity of the task, but Andrew brought a boy with five barley loaves and two small fish. Jesus took these humble offerings, gave thanks, and distributed them to the crowd. Miraculously, everyone had enough to eat, and there were twelve baskets of leftovers.

Lessons in Faith and Generosity:

This miracle teaches us several important lessons. Firstly, it shows us that Jesus cares about our physical needs as well as our spiritual ones. He is the provider who can turn our scarcity into abundance. Secondly, it teaches us the value of faith and generosity. The boy's willingness to share his small lunch was used by Jesus to bless thousands. In our lives, no act of kindness or generosity is too small for God to use in miraculous ways.

Someone someplace is waiting for even a tiny gesture that will make their day and even change their lives. I remember many years ago when I was first attending a local church. I had had a very bad night and I almost did not go to church because my night had been terrible. I felt depressed, I felt ugly, just really down. As I walked into the church, I remember the assistant pastor was at the entrance. He said to me: "You look so nice today." His words changed my state of being. I felt that God himself had said those kind words to me. It was as if God said do not worry you are going to be just fine.

Responding to God's Grace:

As we continue to reflect on this story, we are reminded of our call to respond to God's grace with faith and action. Just as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, He can multiply our efforts to bring about His kingdom on earth. We are invited to trust in His provision and to share our blessings with others, knowing that God can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. A small gesture or a kind word goes a long way for those who need it at that precise moment. It can transform a person's day and maybe even their life.

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons:

Today, we also acknowledge the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons which is on July 30. As we reflect on Jesus' compassion and provision, let us remember those who are suffering from exploitation and trafficking. We are called to be instruments of God's justice and love, working to end human trafficking and to support the survivors in their journey towards healing and restoration.

In conclusion, let us be inspired by the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand to live lives of faith, generosity, and action. Let us trust in God's abundant provision and be willing to share what we have, knowing that He can use our gifts to bless others in ways we cannot even imagine. And let us commit to standing against injustice, remembering that we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. *Amen.*