

What Will I Feed Them?

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ – Luke 9:11b-17

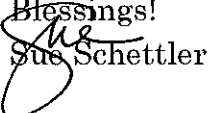
Last year some friends came through Mount Vernon unexpectedly. They called and asked to stop by. It was dinner time, the house was a wreck, I'd worked all week and the thought of having to entertain was overwhelming. I was ready to say "NO", but Bill intervened and said, "This will be great, let's have a party!" Much to my skepticism, the company rolled in and the evening was a huge success. Had I gone with my first gut reaction, it would have just been another uneventful night. It turned into a fun evening of shared food and friendship. I think the Holy Spirit was on deck driving away my doubt of what I would feed this last minute crowd.

Today, Jesus has an impromptu party with 5000 people. He feeds them with five loaves and two fish. As a point of reference...that's about what I had in my freezer! I had a few less people at my table. My initial reaction wasn't much different than the apostles, **"Dismiss the crowd..."** I wanted nothing to do with something that wasn't my planning. That was my key concern. I didn't want to be responsible for something that I hadn't conceived, planned and implemented.

Jesus tells the apostles to **"Give them (the crowd) some food yourselves."** The apostles tell Jesus that all they have is some bread and fish. They know that it isn't going to feed more than a couple of folk. Jesus does a very important thing. First he tells the apostles to practice hospitality. **"Have them sit down in groups of about fifty."** In other words, welcome them to your table, have them get comfortable. Make them feel at home. Wow, how many times have I missed that opportunity, at home, at church, and in the day to day on-going flow of life? Jesus is saying that to really feed someone, we must first offer them ourselves. **"Then taking the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd."** The end result was that **"they all ate and were satisfied."**

If I reflect back to my impromptu party, I really thought that it wouldn't be successful without the perfect meal planned or table set. What I found was, it really was the Lord that provided us with this great night. It was pure gift! When I opened my freezer and my refrigerator, there was more than enough to feed our company. The fact that we opened ourselves up to the possibility of God working a small miracle that evening, resulted in a deepening of self to others, a deepening of lives shared over broken bread.

As we celebrate The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ this week, let us be mindful that what Jesus offers us is a holistic experience. Jesus first and foremost welcomes us with open arms to the Eucharistic banquet. He allows us to tell stories, to sing and to pray with others. We are not by ourselves. This feeding is a communal activity! Jesus orchestrates the working of this wonderful gift of himself, through a dynamic and grace-filled gathering of friends, enemies, relatives and strangers. Then Jesus says to us...Feed each other...Feed each other like I feed you... with love. We do so by taking his real Body and Blood as our nourishment. As with my dinner party, Jesus will supply the necessary ingredients of faith and grace (and hamburger) so we can pour out ourselves onto others and care for them in his name with love.

Blessings!

Sus Schettler