

April 12, 2024 - Friday of the 2nd week of Easter

[Acts 5:34-42; John 6:1-15](#)

Homily

The multiplication of the loaves is the only sign performed by Jesus that is recorded in the four Gospels. This shows the importance attributed to it by the first Christians. Today, we read the story in John's version. John recounts this event after some 65 or 70 years of meditation. He is not interested in the sign or the miracle as such. His whole story is centred on the person of Jesus. He shows us Jesus sharing simply, very simply, without counting, without paying attention to the size of the crowd.

At the beginning of the story, there is one of those mysterious little phrases that are characteristic of John. He says: "It was just before the Passover...". This means that the multiplication of the loaves he tells us about, this sharing of what had been brought, was an essential dimension of the Paschal mystery, and therefore is also an essential dimension of the Eucharistic celebration. The twelve baskets of pieces collected correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. It is therefore also an essential dimension of the Church.

Jesus crossed the lake with his disciples and went up the mountain. From there, he looked up and saw the large crowd following him and perceived their need for food, even before anyone had expressed that need. Philip, to whom Jesus first explained the situation, could not conceive of any solution other than monetary and mathematical: "the wages of two hundred days would not be enough for everyone to have a little morsel of bread". Philip's attitude no doubt corresponds to our own, since we are constantly tempted to give major importance in our lives to the material things we can dispose of, that we can measure, even if it is with the desire to give them away, which is also a form of exercising power.

The solution proposed by Andrew and chosen by Jesus is different. It's one of sharing. When there is real sharing, there is usually enough for everyone. The people around Jesus are not called to line up to receive their food from the hands of generous benefactors; they are invited to lie down, as they did at banquets and especially at the Passover meal, to eat a meal with dignity with other guests. And when all had reclined in the abundant grass (a sign of the abundance of the Kingdom), Jesus himself distributed the food to them, as a host does with his guests.

Document extrait du [site de l'abbaye Notre-Dame de Scourmont](#), qui se trouve sur le territoire de Forges, à sept kilomètres au sud de la ville de Chimay, en Belgique. Notre-Dame de Scourmont est une abbaye de l'Ordre Cistercien de la Stricte Observance.

The crowds followed Jesus because they had seen the healings and other miracles he had performed and wanted to see more. But Jesus is not interested in playing miracle worker. He is interested in people's needs. Similarly, at the end of the story, when the crowds want to proclaim him the Messiah, he flees alone into the mountains.

In a community, we are all called to serve each other. Our human tendency is to seek out positions that put us in the limelight or allow us to wield a certain amount of power. Jesus shows us that, for him, the opposite is true. The only thing he is interested in is serving. We know, as the celebrations of Holy Week reminded us, that this cost him dearly. In the same way, today, in the first reading, we see the Apostles, who have just been beaten up, very happy to have deserved to suffer a little for the name of Jesus.

Let us strive, then, to live in the same spirit of mutual service, to shun honours and material advantages rather than seek them, and if they bring us suffering, to be happy to join them to those of Christ and his Apostles.

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