

Trinity VII

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[0 : 01] May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight. O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Please be seated. Nothing kills the hope of a person like unmet expectations.

I'm sure that all of us have experienced this one way or another. Perhaps it was a time when you put a lot of work into a project or an assignment only for it to turn out poorly.

Maybe it is a loved one who promised to do something for you, only to forget about it or to not meet their end of the bargain. Or maybe it was years and years of work towards something you thought would make life easier, but in the end it didn't meet you or your family's needs.

Though these are relevant examples to us all, I think there is something else that can be difficult to deal with, particularly in our spiritual lives. Oftentimes we put forward the effort of coming to Mass, praying our prayers, exercising compassion on those who are needy.

[1 : 11] But we feel as if God is silent and is indifferent to our efforts. It can be difficult to talk or think about, because our relationship with God is supposed to be the most important relationship that we have in our lives.

Yet we often feel like this is where things are most quiet. And sometimes it feels like the best option is to just give up, or at least put religion away until we feel like it needs to be picked up again, if at all.

Before we despair, let us turn to our gospel text in St. Mark. Here we have the feeding of the 4,000, the feeding of the 5,000 just being recorded in Mark a few chapters before this one.

And it can be easy to overlook the feeding of the 4,000, because it is often assumed that the story is the same, just with different numbers. And it is true that similar things happen in both accounts, but the significance of the stories are in the details.

Small differences do not mean insignificant differences. This time around, it is Jesus who notices the multitudes that are following him. 4,000 have been following him for three days, and he knows that they do not have any food with them.

[2 : 30] 5,000. Having compassion on them, he asks the disciples to get the food that they have, seven loaves of bread and several fish, and he blesses and distributes them.

After they have eaten their fill, the disciples collect seven baskets of leftovers, as opposed to the 12 that were collected in the feeding of the 5,000. He then sends the multitude away before he departs to a different region.

Now, I can imagine that many of the people who were following him were quite famished. Not having food after following Jesus for three days is quite a significant amount of time to not have food.

But even so, they continued to follow him, some of them knowing that what they had seen was incredible, while others followed because they had heard about him from their family or friends, and they wanted to verify the facts for themselves.

Whatever reason they had for following him, they believed that it was worth accompanying him, even if it meant they would be deprived of their basic needs like food, water, and shelter.

[3 : 37] Perhaps some of them even wondered whether or not their efforts would go to waste, that Jesus would not minister to them like they had seen or heard him do. But he sees their faith, and he blesses them with blessed food.

They did not go unseen. Friends, it is the same for us. Just as it was the third day after the Gentiles were following him in the wilderness that our Lord had compassion on them, so it was on the third day that our Lord rose from the grave.

He had compassion on those Gentiles, and by his resurrection, that compassion has come to fruition by beginning a new creation. Just as our Lord blessed the seven loaves for the disciples to distribute to the masses, so our Lord has given us seven sacraments to be fed and nourished by his divine life.

Jesus is not in the business of letting his people go hungry. He always provides us with what we need in this life. And the seven baskets of leftovers that are collected show us that there is always grace left over.

His grace never runs dry, and we can be confident that we will always be nourished time and time again. And what ties this narrative account all together is its placement after the encounter with the Syrophenician woman.

[5 : 05] Even the scraps that Jesus gives to the Gentiles is an overabundance of goodness. Seven baskets of bread were left over.

Even the smallest amount of grace can never be exhausted. And where do we find this grace? This grace that comes to us from the quietness that we perceive from God.

It comes to us, and it is found within the church. While we are striving to live the Christian life and hear from God, he will always be here. When we come to church, we are receiving the seven loaves of bread that Jesus blessed.

This is far from him being quiet. It is the most intimate experience that he can give us. We receive our Lord's body and blood within our own bodies. Our bodies are washed through the holy water of baptism.

We receive forgiveness of our sins through his body, which is the church. If we struggle to see or to hear from God, let us start by trying to receive and hear what we can in the church.

[6 : 13] He has promised to be here for us. The response we must have is faith that he really is here. It may feel like a wilderness now, but one day we will reach the promised land.

Brothers and sisters, let us not despair over the quietness that we perceive from God, but instead hear and receive the words and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ today. He is always present with us, especially during these moments.

Keep on walking with him in the wilderness, because he will notice your hunger and he will feed you. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.