

## Sermon – Trinity 8

'Feeding the Five Thousand (Matthew 14:13-21)

A girl was born in 1910, the youngest child of the family.

Small in stature yet quite tough in body, mind and spirit.

She went to Ireland to become a nun at the age of 18.

And just a year later left Ireland for India in 1929.

With virtually nothing.

Yet by the time of her death in 1997 was world renowned for her work with the disadvantaged.

She received 124 different awards for her work.

Her Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity had 3,914 members, and established in 594 communities in 123 countries of the world.

Not bad for one person with nothing to give but her time.

But the pivotal point in this story is that Mother Teresa, as she is widely known, gave what she had to give.

Mother Theresa had little to give.

Yet she gave all that she had.

She gave her life in service to God.

In service to others.

And thousands, no tens of thousands.

In fact we will never know how many thousands of people were helped in their suffering.

It is amazing isn't it?

Perhaps even a miracle...

In the Gospel reading, all they knew they had was 5 loaves and 2 fishes, which appears woefully inadequate.

But Jesus doesn't say "why bother?"

He says, 'Bring it to me'.

And 5000 were fed

Can you imagine what must have been going through the disciples' minds when they ask Jesus to send them away to find food for themselves,

And Jesus replies...

"They have no need to go away.

**You** give them something to eat".

Can we imagine that feeling?

Faced with the task of feeding 5000 people, quite a task.

The questions that would race through the mind.

How much food will we need?

How long will the preparation take?

What will the shopping bill be?

It would be extremely daunting.

Let alone having to do it with no notice!

Yet we are told that this is exactly what Jesus did and the fact that we cannot see how that could happen is why it is a miracle.

The disciples say, “We have nothing here except five loaves and two fish”.

So little in their hands compared to the task ahead.

So little to offer but it offered, brought to Jesus and through bringing it to Jesus much was achieved.

Some people have tried to make sense of this Gospel story by suggesting that we only know about some of the food.

That lots of other people there must have had food with them too.

And that it wasn't such an amazing thing for them all to be fed.

But even if that were the case, and I have no reason to believe it was, imagine that 5000 people who did not know each other shared their food with one another.

Those who had sharing with those who had not.

What a fantastic image to see all people fed and to have food left over.

I actually think that **IF** this explanation were true it would, in itself, be a miracle for that many strangers to meet together and to share their food

To share what they had with others. Being generous, being kind, being selfless. 5000 people all in one community caring for one another's needs, that still sounds like a miracle to me. A miracle which would only be achievable in the presence of Christ.

I wonder what other examples might there be?

When ordinary people, poor people, broken people, needy people, people like us, people who seem to have so little to offer, offer what little we have to God.

Incredible things can be achieved through us but the first step is that we have to offer him what we have.

Or, to be more accurate, offer back to him, what he has given to us.

He is, after all, the reason we exist, He gave us life.

He gave us everything we have to make the life we are currently living possible and if we dedicate that life to Him, listen to Him, follow Him, obey Him and serve Him God can do so much with our lives.

What we have, really, is very little.

A life of...however many years we may have during which we have temporary ownership of a few earthly possessions.

Yet, if we give this life in service to God, not only can He do great things with it in the here and now, we can live out our days, however long that is, in relationship with Him and with each other.

And when our mortal life is over, we have the sure and certain hope of eternal life.

Compared with anything else I can think of, this is an incredible return.

So I encourage you, and I challenge myself, to be more like Mother Theresa.

To give all that we have willingly, freely, without worrying about whether it will be enough or will really make a difference.

Whether we think of it as a lot or whether we think of it as very little, to take Jesus' words to heart and 'Bring it to him'.

To give it all to God and to trust that God will take us and use us in amazing ways and when this life is over to welcome us into His kingdom to live with Him in Glory forever.

Amen