

The Feeding of the Multitude: Nourishing One Another

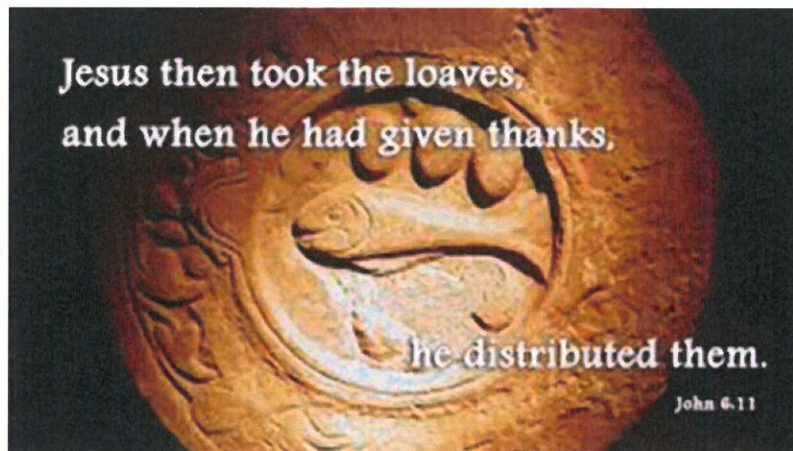
The Feeding of the Multitude is undoubtedly my favorite parable. As a young girl, I grew up in a small community in mid-Missouri, attended Catholic school, and of course we read, studied and dissected the parables. As the amazing story was read-aloud about how Jesus fed so many with very little, I envisioned how the evening unfolded – the pleasantries exchanged while food was being passed and the large numbers of family, friends and even strangers taking time to enjoy a meal together.

This story where Jesus blessed five loaves of bread and two fish, and then instructed the disciples to pass the baskets around to feed a crowd of 5,000 people is a story of faith, of hope and of love. Those who *truly* believe will not only *see* but will *experience* the grace and love of our God. Just as He provided for this hungry crowd, He will provide for us. In return, we are then called to share those gifts.

When it comes to feeding large crowds, many of us, especially mothers, know this very well. Whether cooking for your own family, or as a member of the Booster club preparing game day food for your favorite team, the ultimate reward is to see happy, healthy and nourished children and adolescents. What's most interesting is that while you are providing a meal and sharing conversation, the nourishment involved is more than just vitamins and energy received from the meal – but the true nourishment is the quiet *interaction* – the time with those at the table or those coming through the food line. The smile you offer. The caring qualities you show by serving a dish. The love extended by being there – sharing your time – listening – simply sharing your talents.

On this Mother's Day, I hold loving memories in my heart of my mother who fed and loved all. As a social worker, she

gave everything she had to the young people she counseled, and thoughtfully provided the physical, mental and emotional nourishment each one needed. She was a great steward – not because she was supposed to be, but because she wanted to be. She wanted to make a difference. And she did.



I carry her spirit with me, and have adopted many of her qualities, including gathering and feeding family and friends. Being a mother of two young men, some of our most treasured memories are around the dinner table. On Sundays it wasn't only our family of four, but also college friends and soccer teammates, neighborhood kids and extended family. It wasn't always elaborate, but

that's not why they were there. We quickly learned they came not only for the home-cooked meal – but even more, they came for the fellowship and time together. Several soccer players were from other countries, thousands of miles away from their family and loved ones, and we learned as much from them, as they expressed learning from us.

As the end of another school year quickly approaches, most children are ecstatic about the fun experiences summer will bring. Other children who rely on food, nourishment and positive interaction in their classrooms, feel otherwise. Please pray for those in our community and beyond who will miss the love and support they receive in the classroom and from the district during this time. In a society where there's plenty, it's hard to understand how our fellow neighbor can go hungry. Thankfully many school districts and communities have taken notice and programs are in place to ensure a meal or two is available each day. Every one of us is called to share – we are also called to love – and we are called to act. I invite you to pray and explore

ways in which you can nourish another's life

Written by Bernadette Lawson, a member of our Stewardship Committee

