

## **HOMILY ~ 17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME JULY 27/28, 2024**

Last week I was talking to a beekeeper who runs a company making honey, and I learned a lot about bees. The main thing we think of in connection with bees is that they make honey. They collect nectar from flowers, deposit it in honeycombs, flap their wings to dry it and it becomes honey. In their lifetime, 12 honeybees can only make one teaspoon of honey. They cannot produce much alone; but working together, they can produce a lot. When they are collecting nectar, they are also collecting pollen, which they use to feed their young. In the process, they pollinate 80 percent of all flowering plants and 130 types of fruits and vegetables. They are the leading pollinators of food crops. God had an important purpose for honeybees. I find it hard to believe that this all just happened by chance. I believe that God had a hand in it.

In the Gospel today, we hear about the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. When Jesus suggested that they feed the five thousand people that gathered, two of the disciples had very different reactions. Philip's reaction was that this would just be impossible to do. He wanted Jesus to send them away. Andrew, on the other hand, found a young boy with five barley loaves and two fish. He had no idea how this was going to feed five thousand people, but he brought to Jesus what he could find. I think we need to take his example, give to the Lord what we have and let him work. The media today paints a picture of a world with overwhelming problems. We can do what Philip did and give up, or do what Andrew did and do what you can do, even if you do not know how this can change things. Look what God empowers the honeybees to do just by the simple task of collecting nectar. God works in ways we cannot understand. We always have hope in God.

We are not exactly sure how this miracle happened; but I find it hard to believe that five thousand people went out to a deserted place, and none of them brought any food with them. When I think of my friends bringing food, there is always an over-abundance. That young boy brought some food and

more than he could eat. Maybe Jesus' teaching inspired people to be kind and generous with one another. Maybe seeing that young boy give up his food inspired people who saw it to be generous and that act of kindness multiplied. Maybe that little act of kindness from a young boy helped Jesus to perform this miracle.

Jesus has the people gather the leftovers so that nothing was wasted. Nothing with God is wasted. I do not think he causes the hardships or difficulties in our lives, but he can bring good things from all of these struggles and difficulties. We have to be open to the work that God does in our lives, the opportunities he brings to us and the people he puts in our lives to help us.

At the end of the Gospel Reading, Jesus withdraws because he knew that they people wanted to make him king. They wanted Jesus to take care of everything, but that is not how God works in our lives. He wants to work with us to make good things happen. When I hear people say, "*All we can do is pray,*" I think prayer is extremely important; but maybe there are things we can do. Maybe they are just little things, and we are not sure how God will use them; but we should give it to God, and then let him work.

When we are out in the world sharing our faith, even little things make a difference. Maybe we are a little like the honeybees, alone not much but together we can do great things. We are doing more Christian Service activities in the community, and I think it is good if people know that it is the Church doing it. There is a lot of negative out there about organized religion, so it is good to spread some good news. We are selling St. Edith spirit wear; and on the back of the t-shirts it says, "*The Church at work in the community.*" When we go out to run the soup kitchen at Crossroads, or clean our roads, or pack food boxes at Gleaners, it is good to let people know that the Church is at work in the community. Like the honeybees, together we can do great things.

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim