

JOIN THE GREEN PARTY!

Mt.14.13-21.

Today's Gospel reading tells us that from five loaves and two fish, which was very little, Jesus fed a hungry crowd. All He did was to bless it, break it and have it distributed among the people and it multiplied. Everyone had more than enough to eat. And when they finished eating, they had leftovers to fill twelve baskets.

The part of the story that is sometimes overlooked and which fascinates me is the gathering up of the fragments. I can relate to that. You and I are not going to learn how to multiply miraculously our resources, but we can learn how to save them.

This story of feeding the five thousand is the only one of Our Lord's miracles that is reported in all four Gospels. Everyone of them mentions gathering up what was left over. Obviously, this is a lesson that Our Lord wants us to hear and learn.

We are in much the same circumstances as the people in the story. Through the power of God, they had been blessed with abundant provisions. So have we. Ours have not come to us in so dramatic a fashion, but they are miracles of God, nonetheless. We cannot make crops grow. We did not put oil, gas and coal in the ground. We do not generate the heat of the sun or pour down rain from the sky. God is the one who does all these things. All we can do is to cooperate with Him and so have the things that we need.

That is what the people in the story did. Jesus was the host of this giant picnic. He miraculously multiplied the food. But the people cooperated with Him and everyone's need was met.

We can do the same things. I am convinced that there are enough natural resources in this world to care for the total population, if we will only learn to cooperate with God and share with each other. I am just as convinced that this world, with all of its abundance, cannot possibly support our extravagance. Everybody cannot live

at the same level that a few of us want to live. When a person has more than they need and then they throw away the rest, it means that someone will not have enough. If we are going to live on this planet together, we must get used to the ideas of preserving, conserving and sharing. We cannot throw things away; that kind of living simply will not work.

And besides the economic and material realities, there is a spiritual principle involved. Wasteful living is bad, for it robs someone else of their share, and does no good to the waster. John tells us that it was Jesus who instructed His disciples to gather up the leftovers. That is not surprising; I cannot imagine Our Lord wasting His Father's bounty. To have done that, would have made mockery of His prayer of gratitude for the five loaves and the two fish.

Have you ever observed the lifestyle of a spoiled and thoughtless child, who has been indulged with far more than he needed? Such a child neither appreciates nor knows the value of anything. Why should he take care of his things? Daddy bought them, and he can well afford to buy some more.

I have known some children like that, whose fathers provided for every need and every greed from the cradle to the grave. They were wasteful and never went hungry, but they starved in another way - spiritually, emotionally and psychologically. They never grew up.

Jesus was not that kind of Son, and He would not allow His disciples to become that kind of people. He saw to it that they practised conservation. We must learn to do that, both as individuals and as a society, or else we shall never become whole and healthy men and women.

We are not told what was done with the twelve baskets of leftovers, but we can be certain that it was somehow invested in people. Jesus would have seen to that. Some of us have not learned that truth. We use far more than we need. We waste

more than some people ever have.

Lord Jesus, being wasteful with the gifts Your Father has given us cannot please Him who provides so generously for us. We have to conserve, so that we might share, and others have enough. In this way we become more like You.