

Wednesday 30th November 2022

Reading 1, Isaiah 5: 6-10; Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 22;

Gospel, Matthew 15: 29-37

Lord, your love leaps off the pages of today's readings. You love to give us good things: rich food...choice wines...restful waters...refreshment...courage...a cup that overflows...goodness and kindness...healing...wholeness... compassion.

There is a world of difference between the excesses that we claim for ourselves (at the expense of the planet and our fellow creatures) and God's abundance, a life-giving generosity where nothing is wasted and so much is beautiful.

In the Gospel story, on the mountain, you must be just as hungry and tired as the people around you, but your heart is moved with pity for them: their needs are more important than your own. (Is that what love is - seeing the other person as more important than me?) You take whatever they offer, sanctify it, multiply it, and give it back to them - to us! - so that we don't collapse on the way home. We have been healed, made whole, given strong legs and a voice - to each person exactly what he or she needs. Out of practically nothing, you also give us plenty to eat, and leftovers too.

Looking at the disciples' faces as they reluctantly donate "a few fish" and seven loaves, I appreciate their crushing pragmatism. I resist handing over what I have because I doubt whether it's enough. I might even try to embellish my gifts in all the wrong ways, rather than accepting reality and letting you work through the ordinary. St Paul says that you are the Yes to all God's promises, but even you don't work alone. Like a patient older sibling, you make sure we are involved; eventually we hope to get the hang of things by watching what you do. You don't expect applause for the miracle any more than God expects a round of applause for making the sun rise each morning - although it would probably make us happier if we did let out the occasional cheer.

In hopeful anticipation of the weeks to come, some words from St Robert Southwell: "From death, from dark, from deafness, from despairs, This life, this light, this word, this joy repairs."

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