

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

July 28, 2024



FEEDING

meeting the needs of multitudes

by Drew Downs

Feeding people is an interesting concept. When we feed ourselves or a pet, there is a kind of simple satisfaction. When we make food for others to enjoy, there is a different, more complex satisfaction. And when we are on the giving end of miracles, we have something else entirely.

The work of Manna from Seven, our city's soup kitchens and food pantries is miraculous by the same measure—the

multitudes having their needs met by angels in the flesh. But we're not angels. We're disciples. And serving others is what we do. Because it is what Jesus does.

The lesson of the miracle isn't to believe in miracles. It is to stop believing in scarcity. That people can't be fed and there isn't enough here. There can be enough. That is essential to the miracle. There can be enough when we let go and feed the hungry.

ORDINARY TIME

2024

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Leading into Tomorrow

I'm writing you all this week from Waycross where I'm attending an Episcopal training course from the College for Congregational Development (CCD). Here, I, John Hegedus and Andrew Miller are learning about models for examining our congregation and processes for change. This two-year program is rich with information, training, and guidance for how to utilize these models in our local context.

CCD is a program which was used in two dioceses of The Episcopal Church and we started utilizing it in our Diocese in 2022. Now it is serving fifteen dioceses.

The fruit of our work this weekend will come out throughout the next few years as we make use of these resources to better understand our church, our neighborhood, and our purpose in the community.

After we come home, we will honor the 50th anniversary of the first women ordained as priests in The Episcopal Church. Known collectively as the Philadelphia Eleven, these pioneers didn't merely break the gender barrier, but reveal the wickedness at the heart of exclusion.

Join us on Saturday, July 27th at 4 pm at St. Stephen's for a viewing of *Philadelphia Eleven*, the new documentary detailing the context and experience of their will to follow the vocations they were called into. And then opened the door for many to follow.

With love,
Drew

ORDINARY TIME

2024

FOR SUNDAY

Proper 12B

July 28, 2024

Collect

○ Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Reading

John 6:1-21

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

ORDINARY TIME

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

Reflection

It isn't enough that Jesus fed an impossible multitude. They wanted to make him their king. They didn't *wish* he were their king. They tried to force him into the role. A role already taken by someone else, don't forget.

Are you at least a little surprised by this? That they would do this by force? That this is the response to a joyous miracle? These sheep without a shepherd are protected by Jesus and they're like, *Let's just make this permanent, shall we?*

What is it that they think will happen? Do they expect forcing a man to be king will make them mighty? Do they expect this miraculous feeding would become a regular thing for them in the kingdom? That's got to be it, I suppose. That it isn't just the miracle, but the specific miracle. He could feed them. They could make him feed them. Forever.

We can see why that isn't God's plan here. Why Jesus can't go along with it. And yet, do we not think the same way? Don't we pray for personal miracles and national gain? Don't we want a magical king who could eliminate our every need? That isn't what Jesus offers, though. Are we OK with that?

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