

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly!

This weekend, we join with the Holy Church of God to celebrate World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. This special day was instituted by Pope Francis, four years ago. It is observed on every year on the Fourth Sunday of July. On this day, we take time to honor and show our appreciation for our Grandparents and the Elderly for their role and vocation in our lives.

The theme for this year's celebration is: "Do not cast me off in my old age" (Psalm 71: 9). These words from the Psalmist call us to help our Grandparents and the Elderly to know God's constant care for their lives through our closeness to them and our show of love and respect for them.

The readings for this Sunday talk about God's graciousness and his abundant provision which go beyond our expectations. The readings highlight the fact that our little or small deeds can do wonders or significant things in people's lives.

In the first reading and the gospel, both Elisha and Jesus fed the hungry crowd with a few barley loaves. The first reading tells us that a man brought twenty barley loaves and grain to the prophet Elisha which he used to feed over hundred people. Everyone had enough to eat and there were some left overs.

In the gospel, Jesus multiplied the five barley loaves and two fish to feed over five thousand people. The five barley loaves and the two fish were brought by a young boy.

Jesus took these gifts and gave thanks and distributed them to the hungry crowd. After everyone had eaten and had their fill, the disciples gathered the leftovers about twelve baskets of fragments. This action teaches us to manage our resources wisely and avoid waste in our lives.

The two stories about the miraculous feedings offer profound spiritual truths for our faith journey. The stories give us the glimpse of the Holy Eucharist which is the spiritual meal Jesus shares with us in every mass to nourish and sustain our souls.

Jesus shows us a heart that reaches out to others. When he looked up and saw the great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy bread for these people to eat"? (John 6:5).

Philip provided the answer most of us will give, "Not even with two hundred days wages could we buy loaves enough to feed such a huge crowd." (John 6:7).

Like Philip, we often burden ourselves with limited perceptions of things. We let the immensity of difficult circumstances overwhelm us and we decide to do nothing to help out someone in need. Jesus challenges us to overcome such attitude and calls us to trust in his father's graciousness to turn our little resources into abundance and enough for everyone.

The young boy encourages us to be sensitive to the plight of others and be ready to share our little resources with those in need.

Let us all trust the Lord with our little resources and work to advance his kingdom on earth. Let us ask him for the grace to live in unity and peace, and always show love and respect for one another especially our Grandparents and the Elderly.

God bless.

Rev. Dr. Ben