



Grain

“The meek and mild mediocrity of most of us gives way to the drumbeat of justice that comes slowly, perhaps inevitably, for the poor, for the outcast, for the forgotten, for us.”—Thomas R. Kelly

Field

“Going up into the mountain, he was sitting and came before him many of the rabble, having with them the lame, the mutilated, the blind, the blunted in tongue or ear, and many others. They placed them before his feet, and [Jesus] laid hands on them in service to them. The rabble was amazed seeing the blunt of tongue or ear speaking, the mutilated whole, the lame walking, the blind seeing, and they praised the God of those who wrestle with God.” Then Jesus called his disciples to himself and said, “I have compassion on the rabble because they have been with me three days and they have nothing to eat; and I do not wish to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way...” All ate and were satisfied and took up broken pieces, leftover, seven baskets full. Those who had eaten were four thousand men not including women and children. Mt. 15:29-32 & 39

Thoughts by Rev. Peter Heide, Baraboo (Translation of the Gospel by Rev. Heide, who suggests acknowledging the feeding of the 4,000 for August 6, when the feeding of the 5,000 is the assigned text).

How we love “Magic Man” Jesus with the stories of the miraculous. We glow as the poor disabled are healed and then, with almost no bread and only some fish, Jesus feeds the multitudes, through words of blessing and the action of breaking and giving away. They sit on the ground and share while Jesus makes all the hurts of the world go away. The word *therapeuo*, usually translated “heal” or “cure”, gives us a false sense of well-being as, in truth, our world is still hurting. The literal meaning of *therapeuo*, from which we get “therapy”, is “to lay one’s hands on another in service to them”. It is more about creating a relationship of communal wholeness where those living with the disruptions of “normalcy” learn to share the innovative gifts of life we have together than healing or curing. In vv. 29-39, Jesus demonstrates this relationship of sharing for us. Here the blunt of tongue or ear can speak in ways understood, the lame are able to journey with the group, the mutilated are not shunned, the blind are able to share their vision of the world.

This is not a place of cured ability, but of transformed disability. The socially dead have been with Jesus in that transformative time of three days, and Jesus raises them into a new relationship of living community. The dead of the world now live in the new relationship of “on the third day ...” resurrection wholeness that can only be known in Christ alone. Like the early Church which traditionally fasted from Good Friday until the Easter feast, we enter the story where the 4000 (socially dead) are now a transformed, new-life, resurrection community needing food before embracing the mission and ministry of proclamation.

We may not all be people living with disabilities, but we are people who come with our own social shunning and hurt needing to be attended to in the relationship with Christ. We come to that liturgical time of needing to know Christ’s presence in our lives. We need to see and hear the blessings of apparent scarcity that becomes the miracle of abundance. We need the gift of filling that will carry us into our world of ministry; that place where thousands, even millions, are fed and renewed in the body of our living Lord, hearing those amazing therapeutic words “Given for you,” that we may live in the community of resurrection wholeness. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,
Pastor Peter