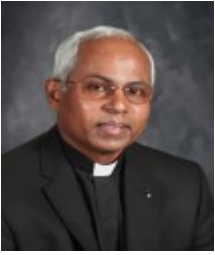


A Letter From Father Francis



God Cannot be Outdone in Generosity

My Dear Friends in Christ,

The readings today should remind us of a simple truth - God cannot be outdone in generosity. In the Gospel, we hear of people who followed Jesus to be nourished by him spiritually, yet little did they know that the Son of God would go even further and provide for even their physical needs.

When the people were hungry and had nothing to eat, it was the offering of a child, a meager offering of five barley loaves and two fish which would be multiplied by Jesus so that all five thousand people would be fed. The small offering of the boy through Jesus' hands was transformed to be more than enough food for all five thousand people, so much so that there were twelve baskets of food left over.

This story of the multiplication of the loaves and fish remind us of a very particular and beautiful moment in the Eucharistic celebration. During the offertory, we present to the Lord our gifts, bread and wine, and just as Jesus performs a miracle in the Gospel, He takes our small offering and transforms them into His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity for us to be nourished by.

When we come to Mass, at the offertory, what gifts are we offering to the Lord? Just as Jesus transforms bread and wine to His body and blood, God wishes to take whatever gift we offer to Him, whether it be our time or talent, and multiply it for the sake of those we share our gifts with.

Let us spend some time and reflect on the ways which God is calling us to share our gifts. Whatever we give to the Lord with a generous and giving heart, God will not let go to waste, for He is a God that cannot be outdone in generosity.

Maybe we can never know what exactly happened on that day, but the gospel reading is suggesting that the Lord can work powerfully through very insignificant resources, such as a small boy and his few loaves and fish. Our human resources, inadequate as they are, matter a great deal to the Lord. If we offer our own insufficient resources to the Lord, if we place them at his service, he can work through them beyond all our expectations. All the Lord asks is that we are generous with what we have, little as that may be, and he will work with our generosity in ways that will surprise us.

The Lord's way of working is different to how the world works. As Saint Paul came to realize, the Lord's power is often made perfect in weakness. On this

occasion, the Lord worked powerfully in the service of a large crowd through the weakness of a small boy with his insufficient resources.

The Lord needs our resources of generosity and gifts today as much as he needed the five barley loaves and the two fish of that young boy, if he is to continue to do his work in the world, if he is to continue to feed those who hunger for food, for love, for God. In responding to all those hungers of his people today, the Lord will not bypass our own resources. They may seem very inadequate to us, but to the Lord they are vital. He asks us to give ourselves and our resources generously to him, to place ourselves, all that we have and all that we are, at his disposal. If we do that, we can never underestimate what the Lord can do in our own lives and in the lives of others through us.

When the people were hungry and had nothing to eat, it was the small offering of a child which would be multiplied by Jesus so that all five thousand people would be fed with more than enough to eat. In the same way, when we offer to God - especially during the Mass - the gifts of our time and talent, God multiplies it and blesses it to be made fruitful for those around us. Nothing is too small to God, and no gift goes unnoticed generosity.

Jesus is present in the everyday encounters of our life to feed us always when we are most empty or when we are hungry. He truly cares and loves each and everyone of us.

**See you at Mass!
Father Francis**

