

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Apr 12th 2024

Your offering is never too late

While describing the scene of Jesus feeding the multitude, John presents the contrasting characters of Andrew and Philip. Philip believed that the situation was hopeless; nothing could be done. Andrew, on the other hand, thought of doing what he could and leaving the rest to Jesus. Thus, he brings the young boy to Jesus and makes the background work for the miracle to happen. We never know what possibilities we are releasing when we bring someone to Jesus.

The boy in the scene had nothing much to offer, but in what he had, Jesus found the materials for a miracle. The boy's willingness to provide and not withhold his loaves and fish is the role of the ideal disciple. When one lays oneself at the altar of his or her service, there is no limit to what Christ can do with us and through us. Little is always much in Christ's hands.

John is the only evangelist who notes that the one who has made available the little food he had “was a child” and that his bread was made “of barley” (v. 9). Barley was the food of the poor. The symbolic value of these details is obvious: in the gospel, the child is the model disciple. Those who want to enter the kingdom of heaven must be like little children (Mk 10:15).

The key to the miracle is to put aside our selfishness and overcome greed, “which is the root of every evil” (1 Tim 6:10). When we make all that we have, available to our sisters and brothers without reservations, the miracle happens: all are fed to the full and even have leftovers.

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