



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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LOAVES AND FISHES - TRANSFORMATION!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpt From Today's Gospel

When Jesus heard of the death of John the Baptist, he withdrew to a boat to a deserted place by himself. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. Jesus said to his disciples, "there is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves." But they (the disciples) said to him, "five loaves and two fish are all we have."

MATTHEW 14: 13-17

Reflection

In this part of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus just heard of the death of John the Baptist and went off in a boat to a "deserted" place to be by himself. When he got out of the boat, the crowd had followed him. Despite his own grief over his

friend's death, Jesus was "moved with pity" and cured the sick. This poignant scene never fails to move me because Jesus sets aside his own plan to be alone because he was "moved with pity" for the people. Would I be that unselfish in such a moment? Would my heart still hold space, despite the grief I was feeling if a friend passed away, to be "moved" enough by another's plight to respond?

Throughout scripture there is a rhythm to Jesus' going off by himself to pray; and yet, he always returns to the crowds to heal, listen, and be present. I strive for this rhythm in my own life – community, ministry, prayer, community, ministry, prayer. Obviously, my life is more than these three aspects, though they are at the center of my call as an apostolic woman religious.

As this passage from Matthew draws to a close, we once again are treated to the scene of the loaves and fishes. I won't go into the symbolism found in these few sentences – that is for another reflection. What moved me in reading this passage was the challenge to be open and trusting because God can transform so much in our lives if we believe, trust, and act. Will we allow God to work through us?



Loaves and Fishes
Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Transform

Do not dwell on "little faith" -- faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains.

Move through this resistance and hesitancy that blocks the Spirit's movement within.

Be open, O doubting Thomas within, to the everyday miracles of life.
Listen, be attentive and open, for the God who transforms awaits you.

Embrace the moments when God's divinity touches our humanity.
Be ready for the unexpected movements of God's promptings within and around.

Rejoice!

For Pondering

- Recall a time in your life when you were moved to action to respond to a greater need than the ones you were carrying in the moment. Allow this memory to inspire you as you reflect on the day ahead.
- Reflect on your own rhythm of prayer, work, family, social action, and leisure. If you experience the rhythm of your life off-kilter, what adjustments might you make?

For Prayer

*O God who continually transforms our lives,
may we remain open to the moments
where our hearts are ready to be moved by our brothers and sisters in need.
May we respond generously, as Jesus did,
despite whatever is happening within us.
We pray that our presence is one that invites trust, hope, and love of God.
Amen.*

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