



72nd Year

August 18, 2024

Pamphlet #33 (3716)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Matthew 14:14-22)

The miracle of satiation of the five thousand

At that time, Jesus saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

THE MIRACLE OF SATIATION OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

The Sunday Gospel of Matthew tells us that multitudes of people with many needs searched for Christ, "on foot" from the surrounding cities, in the desert area, to which He had withdrawn, to hear Him and for Him to heal their sick. "When evening came, the disciples came to Him and told Him: the place is deserted, and the time has passed; therefore, let the multitudes go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

The attitude of Christ

However, Christ's attitude is different: "They do not need to leave. You give them something to eat," He tells them. This is how He overturns the basis of their thinking. He wants to make them communicants in solving the problem. For them to learn to think, not what should be done, in general and indefinitely, but what they should specifically do. To look for solutions in which they personally participate. This active participation of the disciples is not unrelated to the eucharistic interpretation of the event, which we will now talk about.

And we, contemporary disciples of Christ, very often encounter problems. However, it is not enough to describe what should be done by others, but at the same time, we must seriously examine what we can also offer, and not take ourselves out of consideration.

The great miracle

And the miracle begins precisely with the word of Christ, who gives a command to His disciples: "You give them something to eat." Christ takes the loaves and fish, He prays, cuts them into pieces, and gives them to the disciples to distribute them to everyone. They all get filled, five thousand people, not including women and children, and twelve baskets of leftovers remain.

Within the mystery of the Church, the miracle of multiplication of bread and the filling of thousands of souls continues. First, Christ Himself offers the great and priceless things by giving the "bread of life," His own self, changing the bread and the wine of our offering into His precious and holy Body and Blood, which sanctifies the faithful.

Countless choirs of our Saints follow, who offered their own selves as a sacrifice of love. And all the others afterwards, the simple and unknown disciples of Christ, who willingly bring and leave to Him whatever they have for the Christ-like increase of the members of the Church, "for the sake of the whole world." This is the eucharistic meaning of today's miracle. That is why it is not by chance that in the Gospel according to John, after the

story of the multiplication of the loaves, a eucharistic speech of Christ follows, about the bread of life (6:22-71), and the event is placed on the eve of the feast of Pascha. Let it also be noted that the eucharistic interpretation of the miracle of the five thousand, also echoes in the iconography of the Church, as evidenced by the presence of fish in her symbolic depictions of the Divine Eucharist in the catacombs.

The eucharistic life

Since the time of Jesus Christ, when the miracle of the satiation of the five thousand occurred, many years have passed. Culture developed, but the desert did not disappear. In this desert of contemporary life, every now and then, complex problems arise that need to be urgently addressed. In the sought-after solutions, let us not also set aside our personal participation and responsibility. And above all, let's not forget the eternal presence of Christ, Who never ceases to be concerned about all the needs of the people, the spiritual and material ones, and Who is in a position to give unexpected solutions with His love and almightiness. In order to do this, however, we must realize that in the mystery of the Divine Eucharist, we live the insatiable feeding of divine mercy. The bread and wine that we offer to God summarize and include all of our life, and all of our world. But also, the person, who "in repentance" participates in the Eucharist, becomes a catholic person, that is, a person who transcends division and partiality through his participation in the universal Truth and Life. This is the only way for an essential renewal of the world. Because only the eucharistic community, which is transfigured in the Divine Eucharist, is able to truly transfigure the world. "Thine own of Thine own We offer to You..."

† F. A.

Welfare is care and concern of the good God for His creatures

Providence is care that comes from God. Everything that happens with the providence of God occurs God-befittingly, in the best way, and without it being possible to happen in a better way. Whatever He provides – and in fact He provides well – a logical person could very well think about it with the following considerations: God is good; therefore, as good, He provides and takes care of His creatures (because he who does not provide is not good). After all, both humans – and the irrational animals – by their nature, take care of their children. He who does not provide is condemned as evil.

Because God is also all-wise, in an excellent way He shows His care – for all creation. When we see and pay attention to the works of divine providence, we admire the good action of God, and must glorify Him and accept, without examining, all the works of divine providence, even if sometimes they seem unfair and incomprehensible to us.

(From the book of the Apostolic Ministry:
Anthology of Counsels of Saint Paisios the Hagiorite)

August 18, 2024: 8TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW
Florus, Lavros, Leon and Hermos martyrs;
Exhumation of the Relics of Saint Arsenius of Paros († 1877).
Grave Tone – Eothinon: 8 – Epist: 1 Cor. 1:10-17 – Gsp: Matt. 14:14-22
NEXT SUNDAY: August 25, 9th Sunday of Matthew
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 3:9-17 – Gospel: Matthew 14:22-34

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