



Wednesday Prayer

10th Sunday after Pentecost – Blessed in Community

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Matthew 14:13-21

I’m writing this on National Night Out, a time to come together in community to eat and get to know our neighbors, however we may define neighbor. I am blessed to be in community with both my church neighbors in the city, located in an area of great need for many, and the new neighborhood that I moved to just a year ago. I’ll try my best to split my time between the two – an abundance of community on this night.

Our Gospel lesson for this Sunday begins with Jesus withdrawing from community to be by himself. We all need a time and space to recharge, and for those of us who are introverts, it is in the quiet time alone. It seems Jesus doesn’t get these opportunities often, as the crowds are always following. Yet he doesn’t send them away, he proceeds with healing and feeding. He attends to both their spiritual needs and their physical needs.

What are the spiritual and physical needs of the young people around us today? We know there is a significant mental health crisis amongst young people in the aftermath of these past few years. What role can we play to support children and youth, to bless them with a community of love and care? There are many ways to build and deepen relationships – with your church youth group or Confirmation class, your children and grandchildren, or by supporting a local youth shelter or program serving those in the greatest need. Through small and consistent acts, we can transform what seems like a little into an abundance.

God of Abundance, help us to see the needs of our neighbors and reach out in community to share your blessings. Move us to action. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

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