

GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

July 28, 2024

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The world is filled with people whose basic needs aren't met, whether for clean water, nutrition, safety, education, meaningful work, stable family life, basic medical resources, religious freedom, and the right to life. So how can we possibly believe what Psalm 145 says to us this week, "**The hand of the Lord feeds us, he answers all our needs**"? Does he? What about the countless poor? Can't we identify at least a few unmet needs in our own lives right now? Is the Bible promoting wishful thinking and laziness in helping others?

No. The psalm flows from Israel's experience of God's relentless fidelity again and again — especially in the Passover from Egypt. This divine providence is recalled when Jesus feeds the needy multitudes in the Gospel of John. Passover arrives once again, and the people are hungry like the ancient Israelites on the wilderness journey. What is new is that in Jesus God not only provides for their needs, but He learns what it's like to have those human needs. He shares them too. He feeds them bread and fish; and even more, He hungers to provide them, and us, much more than just that kind of perishable food.

Our deepest need is for God. Like the multiplied bread, all earthly provisions ultimately fail, for we all finally die. Of course, our obligation to meet the needs of the poor is basic. But Christ promises to feed us with the one bread that never fails: God Himself. He is humanity's eternal food. If we eat this bread, we taste the faithfulness of God who answers all our needs, even when every earthly thing fails.

— *Father John Muir*

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