

# Miracles can use our input

17th Sunday of the Year (July 27): (R3) John 6:1-15; (R1) 2 Kings 4:42-44; (R2) Ephesians 4:1-6.

It was Passover, and Jesus went up a mountain with his disciples. When the people saw Jesus go up the mountain, it reminded them of Moses going up Mount Sinai to commune with God and returning with the Ten Commandments. The people expected the same kind of miracle from Jesus, so they followed him.

When Jesus saw how many people there were, he asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" Philip panicked. He said, "Not even 200 days wages could buy enough loaves to give each a mouthful."

Andrew saw Philip's distress and tried to help. He said to Jesus, "There is a lad here with five barley loaves and a couple of dried fish, but what good is that for so many?" Even the disciples didn't think in terms of the miraculous. They had forgotten who it was that was with them.

Jesus probably smiled sadly at their skepticism. He said, "Get the people to recline on the grass." The men alone numbered over 5,000. Jesus took the loaves and the fish and blessed them and told the disciples to pass them around. Guess what? There were 12 baskets full of the pieces left over.

First of all, Jesus did not create all that bread from nothing. He multiplied that which was given. It was important that the lad gave the bread and the fishes.

In the same way God waits for us to put something in his hand to work with even though all things are his already. For miracles to happen, we have to give of ourselves, our time, our resources. Even when we think we don't have anything to give, if we are willing to give the little we have, God will make the impossible become possible. Nobody would have said feeding 5,000 with five loaves was possible that day. But Christ can do so much with so little, provided we offer him the little we have.



Father Albert Shamon

## A word for Sunday

In the second place, this really was a miracle. When the people realized what had happened, they wanted to take Jesus by force and make him king. They figured that if he were their king, then bellies would always be full and they would never have to worry about hunger again.

It is easy for us to fall into the same trap — to see Jesus only for what he can do for us. Instead of being self-centered, we need to be Christ-centered. The right way to use prayer is not to try to manipulate God. "Get me this position." "I want my child to be a girl." Rather, prayer is a sharing of our concerns with one who provides for all our needs.

Miracles happen. But they are most apt to happen when we have first of all done everything we can to help ourselves. Prayer must not be an attempt to manipulate God but rather to share our loaves and fish with one who has promised never to forsake us.

Finally, Christ is the real bread. When we as church speak of offering bread to a hungry world, we are talking about more than physical bread. We are talking about giving them Christ.

A salesman in his 30s had attended a number of churches, but was not really interested in religion. But one day after he had broken up with a young woman and was feeling hurt, some people reached out to him. They made him feel that he

was a part of their family. Soon he went to church with them. Then one day he experienced something he had never had before. At church he was invited to follow Jesus. He said he did and that changed his whole life.

The feeding of the 5,000 was an important incident in the life of the church. Each Gospel mentions the event. The early church remembered when Jesus fed the crowd. They viewed themselves as ones who were taking their small beginnings; their few loaves and distributing them to the entire world, offering hope to the hopeless.

Miracles are possible. They occur every day. But we must give of ourselves for miracles to occur. God blesses us and others when we share the bread of our faith.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

## Daily Readings

Monday, July 28

Exodus 32:15-24, 30-34;

Psalms 106:19-23;

Matthew 13:31-35

Tuesday, July 29

Exodus 33:7-11, 34:5B-9, 28;

Psalms 103:6-13;

John 11:19-27 or Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday, July 30

Exodus 34:29-35;

Psalms 99:5-7, 9;

Matthew 13:44-46

Thursday, July 31

Exodus 40:16-21, 34:38;

Psalms 84:3, 6, 8, 11;

Matthew 13:47-53

Friday, August 1

Leviticus 23:1, 4-11, 15-16, 27,

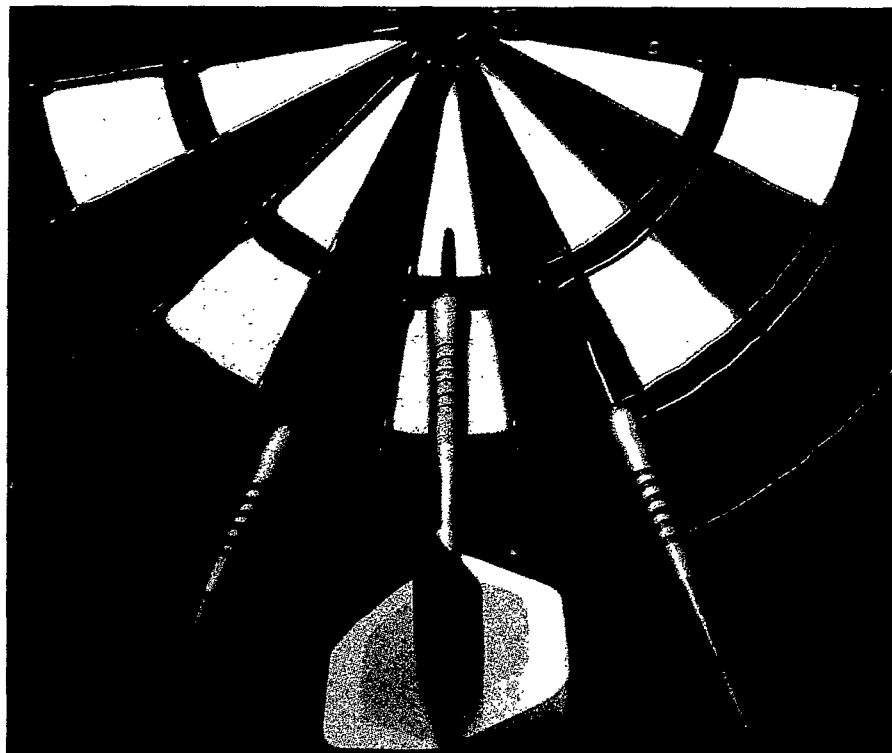
34B-37; Psalms 81:3-6, 10-11;

Matthew 13:54-58

Saturday, August 2

Leviticus 25:1, 8-17; Psalms

67:2-3, 5, 7-8; Matthew 14:1-12



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