

**“There IS a boy here who has five barley loaves & two fish, but...”**

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Once upon a time**...a fellow by the name of Jay Kessler wrote a book called **“Growing Places.”** In it, he tells how, one night, after landing at an airport in India and picking up his baggage, he took a bus to a nearby city. The bus arrived after midnight. As Jay walked down the deserted street to his hotel, he saw poverty all around him.

Then, suddenly, he heard a strange sound: thump, thump, scrape; thump, thump, scrape; thump, thump, scrape. He turned around and saw a boy, whose legs were cut off almost to his body. The boy was dragging himself along with two, tiny crutches...thump, thump, scrape! When the boy reached Jay, he looked up at him and held out his hand. Jay gave him all the loose change he had. Then Jay continued on to his hotel.

He hadn't taken 10 steps when he heard another strange sound. When he turned around this time, he saw several beggars hitting the boy with his own crutches. They were trying to force the boy to give them his coins.

Jay didn't sleep that night.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Once upon a time**...a middle-aged woman came into the midst of this poverty and cruelty. She saw the tragic situation and said to herself, **“Something's got to be done.”**

So, she took all the money she had and rented an old building with a dirt floor. The building wasn't much, **but**...and there's that proverbial **BUT** in life, my friends...it would do.

*Whatever happened to that middle-aged woman and her undertaking—you ask?*

**Well—I'm glad you asked that question.**

Today she has more than 80 fully equipped schools, 300 modern, mobile dispensaries, 70 leprosy clinics, 30 homes for the dying and aides victims, 30 homes for abandoned children, and 40,000 volunteers worldwide! The woman was, of course, Mother Teresa of Calcutta!

\*\*\*\*\*

*I can't think of a better story to illustrate the point of today's gospel, which I just read to you from St. John. Take a closer look at this Gospel with me.*

The boy had 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Jesus asked him for them to feed the crowd. The boy gave them to Jesus ...and Jesus did the rest. He fed well over 5,000 people!

That's what Mother Teresa did, too. She gave him her 'loaves & fish' ...and Jesus did the rest! He multiplied them way beyond her dreams.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The story of Mother Teresa, as well as the story of the man in the 1<sup>st</sup> reading, and the story of the boy in the Gospel—all 3 stories make the same point.*

*As a matter of fact, it's the same point that John Paul II made to the young people in Edinburgh during his visit to Scotland in 1982. The pope said to them:*

**“Now the point I wish to make is this: [the boy in the gospel] gave all that was available & Jesus, miraculously, fed those 5,000+ people and still had leftovers! It's exactly the same with our lives. Left alone to face the difficult challenges of life, we feel the consequences of our own inadequacies & are afraid of what the future may hold for us. **BUT**...what I say to you is this: Place your lives in the hands of Jesus. He will accept you and bless you and he will make use of your lives in a way that exceeds your greatest expectation.”**

\*\*\*\*\*

Today's readings invite us to look into our hearts and ask ourselves:

How much of our lives/resources are we currently placing in **his** hands to do with as **he** wishes?  
To what extent are we giving of ourselves & our resources to Jesus, as Mother Teresa did, as the man in the 1<sup>st</sup> reading did, as the boy in today's Gospel did?

In today's Gospel, Jesus is saying to us:

***"I need your talent.  
I need your generosity.  
I need **you**.  
I need your feet.  
I need your hands.  
I need your tongue.  
I have only **your** feet to carry me into the slums, the factories, the hospitals, the universities,  
and the offices of your cities.  
I have only **your** hands to reach out to the helpless, the homeless, and the hopeless.  
I have only **your** tongue to tell my brothers and sisters why I came to live on earth and...  
why I suffered and died for them."***

*In summary, this is the message of today's Gospel:*

*Jesus invites us to cooperate with him in working miracles...  
not unlike those he worked in biblical times.*

*Whatever we give him—our time, our talent, our prayers, our sacrifices, our resources  
—he will use in a way that will exceed our greatest expectations.*

*He will multiply them beyond anything we dreamed of,  
just as he did the boy's loaves and fish in today's Gospel.*

*I close with this prayer:*

***"Take, Lord:  
Take my liberty.  
Take my memory.  
Take my understanding and my entire will.  
Take whatever I am and have.  
You have given it all to me.  
Now, I give it back to you...freely!  
Do with it...whatever you wish.  
Give me only your love and your grace.  
With these, I am most rich and desire nothing more. Amen***

*May our loving God, our Abba, bless you—now and **always**...  
in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*