

The Faith of Our Fathers

“The wonder of the miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand surpasses human understanding.” What is most amazing, however, is what this miracle teaches us about the compassion and grace of God in Christ. Just as the leaves and fish never seem to end, so Our Lord’s mercy more than covers our need, more than comforts us in distress. God’s forgiveness more than exceeds whatever sin we may have done. God’s compassion is greater than our greatest tribulation. Our heart’s desire, the needs of our body and soul, our Jesus meets—and then some. (St. Hilary) ❧❧❧

Those who cling to Our Lord’s Word, He teaches how they ought to trust him. He doesn’t use many words, but rather by action and deed shows that He can create what we need to eat, so that we do not doubt or think that provision is up to us, but rather place our heart and trust in Him. Such faith will not be disappointed nor permit us to suffer want. He provides for all our needs and makes sure we are well fed in body and soul. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

In today’s Gospel, before Our Lord feeds the five thousand, He tests Philip. He did this, not to learn something He did not know, but so that Philip might recognize the slowness of his faith. His Lord knew of this, but Philip did not. But after he is tested, Philip recognizes both the truth and the miracle, and so his faith is strengthened. (St. Bede the Venerable) For the same reason, Our Lord often tests our faith. His desire is not to embarrass us, but to urge us to remember that we can rely on Him in every need. ❧❧❧

We who live in Christ and receive His Eucharist—the food of salvation—ask for this bread to be given to us every day. For Christ says, “Anyone who eats My bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world.” So we receive life when we approach His body and share in the communion. For this reason we should be apprehensive and pray that no one has to abstain from this communion, lest they be separated from the body of Christ and be far from salvation. Christ has warned of this: “If you do not eat the

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flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you will have no life in you.” We pray for our daily bread, Christ, to be given to us. With his help, we who live and abide in him will never be separated from his body and his grace. (St. Cyprian) ❧❧❧

By the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Our Lord Jesus encourages us to partake of a spiritual food. And He teaches that we should seek and expect nourishment for the soul from Him. For when He explains this miracle, He calls himself the bread from heaven and the true food. And so He says: “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

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