



July 26, 2015

Feast of Sts. Joachim & Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining and also as much of the fish as they wanted. John 6: 11

Dear Friends;

Have you grown or known someone who grew zucchini? Once it gets started there seems to be no stopping it. You have bags and bags of the vegetable. You prepare it in a hundred different recipes: you sauté it, you stuff it and bake it, you make bread with it. You carry bags with you. And when family and friends see you coming with the bags they move in the opposite direction. It is prolific and abundant. With zucchini in the world no one should ever go hungry.

Today Jesus provides a feast not with zucchini but with some barley loaves of bread and some fish. Jesus observes the hunger of the crowd. For Jesus there is more than enough for those who trust in the abundance of God. The abundance of God permeates creation. Theologian Gerhard Lohfink puts it this way:

Nature “luxuriates.” What an opulence of flowers and butterflies alone! What a superfluity of seeds to produce a single living thing! What an expenditure of solar systems, Milky Ways and spiral nebulae! An entire universe is squandered in order to produce more and more costly forms of life on a single planet and to prepare a place for the human Spirit.

Jesus places his faith in the God who wants to richly provide for us. He comes from a place of wonder and gratitude rather than scarcity and fear. The “myth of scarcity” is used by the powerful to instill fear in us. It is used to keep the rich and powerful rich and powerful. It scares us into thinking that there will not be enough, and that I might lose even what little I have. It has led to destructive results throughout human history.

In opposition to the economics of scarcity Jesus invites us to Sabbath rest. (I wrote of this last week.) To observe the rest of Sabbath is a protest against the tyranny of the myth of scarcity. People who think their lives consist in struggling to get more and more can never slow down because they will never have enough.

Resting on the Sabbath teaches us to trust in the abundance that God provides. So Jesus has the people recline. This is the posture of a people celebrating a feast. Jesus will nourish them with the teaching of the God who rests and abundantly provides, here and now. This is the realization of the banquet of the Kingdom. Scarcity is a fraud. In God’s house is life not death; windfall not shortfall; abundance not scarcity. God is here lavishly pouring upon us the Spirit of his love. Feast on God’s generosity drink in his Spirit.

So after inviting the people to rest in the superabundance of God he gives thanks. He blesses and shares. This is our call as Christians. We celebrate it in the Eucharist and in our daily lives. As Rabbi Abraham Heschel writes:

*Get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted.
Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually.
To be spiritual is to be amazed. –Between God and Man*

Peace,

Fr. Ron